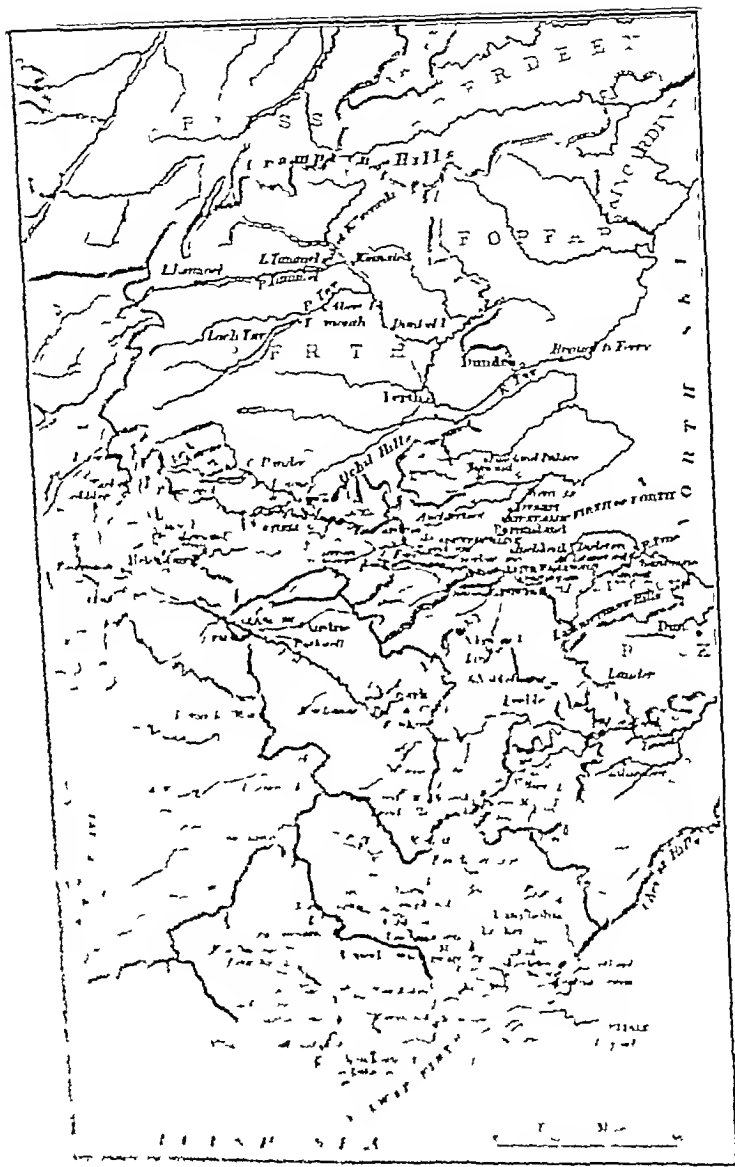




# REMINISCENCES



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BY

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**By CHARLES ELIOT NORTON**

CONTENTS  
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	PAGE
EDWARD IRVING	I
LORD JEFFREY	221
SOUTHEY	276
WORDSWORTH	297
INDEX	311



# REMINISCENCES

*EDWARD IRVING*

[Cheyne Row, Autumn 1866]

EDWARD IRVING died thirty-two years ago (December 1834), in the first months of our adventurous settlement here, the memory of him is still clear and vivid with me, in all points,—that of his first and only visit to us in this House, in this room, just before leaving for Glasgow (October<sup>1</sup> 1834), which was the last we saw of him, is still as fresh as if it had been yesterday,—and he has a solemn, massive, sad and even pitiable, though not much blamable, or in heart *ever* blamable, and to me always dear and most friendly aspect, in those vacant Kingdoms of the Past. He was scornfully forgotten at the time of his death, having indeed sunk a good while before out of the notice of the more intelligent classes. There has since been and now is, in the new theological generation, a kind of revival of him, on rather weak and questionable terms, sentimental mainly, and grounded on no really correct knowledge or insight, which, however, seems to bespeak

<sup>1</sup> It must have been before October, for Irving had already set out on his journey to Glasgow early in September.



some continuance of vague remembrance, for a good while yet, by that class of people and the many that hang by them—Being very solitary, and except for converse with the Spirits of my Vanished Ones, very idle in these hours and days, I have bethought me of throwing down (the more rapidly the *better*) something of my recollections of this to me very memorable man, in hopes they may by possibility be worth something by-and-by to some,—not worth *less* than nothing to anybody (*viz.* not true and candid according to my best thoughts), if I can help it. *Pergamus*, therefore,—and be a great deal *s. faster*, if you please!—

The Irvings, Edward's father and uncles, lived all within a few miles of my native place, and were of my Father's acquaintance. Two of the uncles, whose little Farm-establishments lay close upon Ecclefechan, were of his familiars, and became mine more or less, especially one of them ("George of Bogside") who was further a co-religionist of ours (a "*B'ngl's* Seceder," not a "Kirkman," as the other was). They were all cheerfully quiet, rational and honest people of a good-natured and prudent turn, —something of what might be called a kindly

successfully diligent in his affairs (no bad proof of "intellect" in some shape), though otherwise a most taciturn, dull, and almost stupid-looking man, I remember this other fact, that he had one of the *largest heads* in the district, and that my Father, he, and a clever and original Dr Little, their neighbour, never could be fitted in a Hat-shop of the village, but had always to send their measure to Dumfries to a Hat-maker there. Whether George had a round head or a long I do not recollect. There was a fine little spice of innocent, faint, but genuine and kindly banter in him, now and then. Otherwise I recollect him only as heavy, hebetated, elderly or old, and more inclined to quiescence and silence than to talk of or care about anything exterior to his own interests temporal or spiritual.

Gavin, Edward's Father (name pronounced Ga-yin = Guyon, as Edward once remarked to me), a tallish man, of rugged countenance, which broke out oftenest into some innocent flier of merriment, or readiness to be merry, when you addressed him, was a prudent, honest-hearted, rational person, but made no pretension to superior gifts of mind, though he too perhaps may have had such in the undeveloped form,—thus, on ending his apprenticeship, or by some other lucky opportunity, he had formed a determination of seeing a little of England in the first place, and actually got mounted on a stout pony, accoutrements succinctly complete (road-money "in a belt round his own body"), and rode, and wandered at his will, deliberate southward, I think for about six weeks, as far as Wiltshire at least, for I have heard him speak of Devizes, "*The Devizes*" he

called it, as one of his halting-places. What his precise amount of profit from this was, I know not at all, but it bespeaks something ingenuous and adventurous in the young man. He was by craft a Tanner, had settled in Annan, soon began to be prosperous, wedded well, and continued all his life there. He was among the younger of those brothers, but was clearly the head of them, and indeed had been the making of the principal two, George and John, whom we knew. Gavin was Bailie in Annan, when the furious *Election* sung by Burns ('There were five carlins in the South,'—five burghs, namely) took place, Gavin voted the right way (Duke of Queensberry's way), and got for his two brothers, each the lease of a snug Queensberry Farm, which grew ever the snugger, as dissolute "Old Q" developed himself more and more into a cynical egoist, sensualist, and hater of his next heir (the Buccleuch, not a Douglas but a Scott, who now holds both Dul edoins) a story well known over Scotland, and of altogether lively interest in Annandale (where it meant "entail-leases" and large sums of money) during several years of my youth.

These people, "the Queensberry Farmers," seem to me to have been the happiest set of Yeomen I ever came to see, not only because they sat easy as to rent but because they  *knew*  fully  *how*  to sit so, and were pious, modest, thrifty men, who neither fell into hygeard relaxation of diligence, nor were stung by any madness of ambition, but faithfully continued to turn all their bits of worldly success into real profit for soul and body. They disappeared (in Chancery I wasnt) fifty years ago. I have seen

various kinds of Farmers, cultivated, monied, scientific etc. etc., but as desirable a set, not since.

Gavin had married well, perhaps rather above his rank, a tall, black-eyed handsome woman, Sister of certain Lowthers in that neighbourhood, who did most of the inconsiderable Corn-trade of those parts, and were considered a stiff-necked faithful kind of people, apter to do than to speak,—originally from Cumberland, I believe. For her own share, the Mother of Edward Irving had much of fluent speech in her, and of management, thrifty, assiduous, wise, if somewhat fussy, for the rest, an excellent house-mother, I believe, full of affection and tender anxiety for her children and husband. By degrees she had developed the modest prosperity of her household into something of decidedly "genteel" (Annan "gentility"), and, having left the rest of the Irving kindred to their rustic solidities, had probably but little practical familiarity with most of them, though never any quarrel or estrangement that I heard of. Her Gavin was never careful of gentility, a roomy simplicity and freedom (as of a man in dressing-gown) his chief aim, in my time, he seemed mostly to lounge about, superintended his tanning only from afar, and at length gave it up altogether. There were four other Brothers, three of them small farmers (the two eldest near Ecclefechan, and known to me), and a fourth who followed some cattle-traffic in Annan, and was well esteemed there for his honest simple ways. No Sister of theirs did I ever hear of, nor what their father had been,—some honest little farmer, he too, I conclude.

Their mother, Edward Irving's aged grandmother,

I well remember to have seen, once, perhaps twice, at her son George's fireside, a good old woman, half in dotage, and the only creature I ever saw spinning with a *distaff* and no other apparatus but tow or wool—All these Irvings were of blond or even of red complexion, red hair a prevailing or sole colour in several of their families Gavin was himself reddish, or at least sandy-blond, but all his children had beautifully coal-black hair,—except one girl, the youngest of the set but two, who was carroty like her cousins. The brunette Mother, with her swift black eyes, had prevailed so far Enough now for the genealogy, superabundantly enough [Stop for the day, 14<sup>th</sup> September]

One of the circumstances of Irving's boyhood ought not to be neglected by his Biographers the remarkable schoolmaster he had "Old Adam Hope," perhaps not yet fifty in Irving's time, was all along a notability in Annan What had been his specific history or employment before this of schoolmastering, I do not know, nor was he ever my schoolmaster, except incidentally for a few weeks, once or twice, as substitute for some absentee who had the office but I can remember reading in *School* with him, on one such occasion, and how

bare-headed, hands usually crossed over back, and with his effective leather strap ("Cat," as he called it, not *lawe*, for it was not *slit* at all) hanging ready over his thumb, if requisite anywhere. In my time, he had a couple of his front teeth quite black, which were very visible, as his mouth usually wore a settled humanely-contemptuous grin, "Nothing good to be expected from *you*, or from those you come of, ye little whelps, but we must get from you the *best* you have, and not complain of anything" this was what the grin seemed to say, but the black teeth (*jet-black*, for he chewed tobacco also, to a slight extent, never spitting) were always mysterious to me,—till at length I found they were of cork, the product of Adam's frugal penknife, and could be removed at pleasure. He was a man humanely contemptuous of the world, and valued "suffrages" at a most low figure, in comparison,—I should judge, an extremely proud man. For the rest, an inexorable logician, a Calvinist at all points, and Burgher Scotch Seceder to the backbone. He had written a tiny *English Grammar* latterly (after Irving's time, and before mine), which was a very compact, lucid and complete little Piece, and was regarded by the natives, especially the young natives who had to learn from it, with a certain awe, the feat of Authorship in print being then somewhat stupendous, and beyond example in those parts. He did not know very much, though still a good something, Geometry (of Euclid), Latin, Arithmetic, English Syntax, but what he did profess or imagine himself to know, he knew in every fibre and to the very bottom. More rigorously solid teacher of the

young idea, so far as he could carry it, you might have searched for through the world in vain. Self-delusion, half-knowledge, sham instead of reality, could not get existed in his presence. He had a Socratic way with him, would accept the poor hapless pupil's half-knowledge, or plausible sham of knowledge, with a kind of welcome, "*Hm, hm, yes,*" then gently enough begin a chain of inquiries more and more surprising to the poor pupil, till he had reduced him to zero, to mere *non plus ultra*, and the dismal perception that his sham of knowledge had been flat misknowledge with a spice of dishonesty added. This was what he called "making a boy fast." For the poor boy had to sit in his place, under arrest all day, or day after day, meditating those dismal new-revealed facts, and beating ineffectually his poor brains for some solution of the mystery, and feasible road out. He might apply again at pleasure, "I have made it out, Sir," but if again found self-deluded, wanting, it was only a new padlock to those *fastenings* of his. They were very miserable to the poor penitent, or impenitent, wretch.

I remember my Father's once describing to us, a call he had made on Hope, during the mid-day hour of interval, whom he found reading or writing something not having cared to lock the door and go home, "with three or four bits of boys sitting prisoner" made fast "in different parts of the room, all perfectly miserable, each with a rim of black worked out round his eye-sockets" (the effect of a tear, wiped by knuckles rather dirty)!

What though not cat-like of temper or intention,

had a kind of cat-pleasure in surveying and playing with these captive mice,—which was to turn out so beneficial withal. He did not much use the leather strap, I believe, though it always dangled ready, but contented himself with these spiritual agonies of “making fast,” instead. He was a praise and glory to well-doing boys, a beneficent terror to the ill-doing or dishonest-blockhead sort,—and did what was in his power to *educate* (or educate) and make available the net amount of faculty discoverable in each, and separate firmly the known from the unknown or misknown in those young heads. On Irving, who always spoke of him with mirthful affection, he had produced quietly not a little effect, prepared him well for his triumphs in Geometry and Latin, at College,—and, through life, you could always notice, overhung by such strange draperies, and huge superstructures so foreign to it, something of that old primeval basis of rigorous logic and clear articulation laid for him in boyhood by old Adam Hope. Old Adam indeed, if you know the Annanites and him, will be curiously found visible there to this day, an argumentative, clear-headed, sound-hearted, if rather conceited and contentious set of people, more given to intellectual pursuits than some of their neighbours. I consider Adam an original, meritorious kind of man, and regret to think that his sphere was so limited. In my youngest years his brown, quietly-severe face was familiar to me in Ecclefechan Meeting-house (my venerable Mr Johnston’s hearer on Sundays, as will be afterwards noted), younger *kindred*, cousins of his, excellent honest people, I have since



met (David Hope, Merchant in Glasgow, William Hope, Scholar in Edinburgh, etc), and one tall straight old Uncle of his, very clean always, brown as mahogany and with a head white as snow, I remember very clearly as the picture of gravity and pious seriousness in that poor Ecclefechan Place of Worship,—concerning whom I will report one anecdote, and so end Old David Hope, that was his name, lived on a little farm close by Solway Shore, a mile or two east of Annan. A wet country, with late harvests, which (as in this year 1866) are sometimes incredibly difficult to save. Ten days continuously pouring, then a day, perhaps two days, of drought, part of them it may be of roaring wind,—during which the moments are golden for you (and perhaps you had better work all night), as presently there will be deluges again. David's stuff, one such morning, was all standing dry again, ready to be sowed still, if he stood to it, which was much his intention. Breakfast (wholesome hasty porridge) was soon over, and next in course came family worship, what they call "Taking the Book" (or Books, i.e. taking your *Bibles*, Psalm and Chapter always part of the service). David was putting on his spectacles, when somebody rushed in, "Such a raging wind risen, will drive the *stooks* (shocks) into the sea if let alone!" "Wind?" answered David. "Wind canna get ae straw that has been appointed mine, sit down, and let us worship God!" (that rides in the whirlwind)!—There is a kind of citizen which Britain used to have, very different from the millionaire Hebrews, Rothschild & Co. or the Demosthenic Disrachs, and inspired

young Goschens, and their "unexampled prosperity" Weep, Britain, if these latter are among the honourable you now have!—

One other circumstance that peculiarly deserves note in Irving's young life, and perhaps the only other one, is also connected with Adam Hope Irving's young religion Annandale was not an irreligious country,—though Annan itself (owing to a drunken Clergyman, and the logical habits they cultivated) was more given to sceptical free-thinking than other places,—the greatly prevailing fashion was, a decent form of devoutness, and pious theoretically anxious regard for things Sacred, in all which the Irving Household stood fairly on a level with its neighbours, or perhaps above most of them They went duly to Kirk, strove still to tolerate and almost to respect their unfortunate Minister (who had succeeded a father greatly esteemed in that office, and was a man of gifts himself, and of much good-nature, though so far gone astray), nothing of profane, I believe, or of the least tendency that way, was usually seen, or would have been suffered without protest and grave rebuke in Irving's environment near or remote At the same time this other fact was visible enough, if you examined "A man who awoke to the belief that he actually had a soul to be saved or lost was apt to be found among the Dissenting people, and to have given up attendance on the Kirk" It was ungentleel for him to attend the Meeting-house, but he found it to be altogether salutary This was the case throughout, in Irving's district and mine,—as I had remarked for myself, nobody teaching me, at an early period of my inves-

tigations into men and things I concluded it would be generally so over Scotland, but found when I went north, to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, etc., that it was not, or by no means so perceptibly was. For the rest, all Dissent in Scotland is merely a stricter adherence to the National Kirk in all points, and the then Dissenterage is definable to moderns simply as a "*Free Kirk* making no noise." It had quietly (about 1740), after much haggle and remonstrance, "seceded," or walked out of its stipends, officialities, and dignities, greatly to the mute sorrow of religious Scotland, and was still, in a strict manner, on the united voluntary principle, preaching to the people what of best and sacredest it could. Not that there was not something of rigour, of severity, a lean-minded controversial spirit among certain brethren, (mostly of the laity, I think), "narrow-nebs" (narrow of *nib*, i.e. of nose or bill) as the outsiders called them, of flowerage, or free harmonious beauty, there could not well be much in this system but really, except on stated occasions (annual fast-day, for instance, when you were reminded that "a testimony had been lifted up," which *you* were now the bearers of), there was little, almost no talk, especially no preaching at all about "patronage," or secular controversy, but all turned on the weightier and universal matters of the Law, and was considerably entitled to say for itself, "Hear, all men" Very venerable are those old Seceder Clergy to me, now when I look back on them. Most of the chief presbyters among them, in Irving's time and mine, were very old men. Men so like what one might call the old Evangelists in modern vesture, and Poor

Scholars and Gentlemen of Christ," I have nowhere met with in Monasteries or Churches, among Protestant or Papal Clergy, in any country of the world—All this is altered utterly at present, I grieve to say, and gone to as good as nothing or worse. It began to alter just about that period, on the death of those old hoary Heads, and has gone on with increasing velocity ever since. Irving and I were probably among the last products it delivered before gliding off, and then rushing off, into self-consciousness, arrogance, insincerity, jangle and vulgarity, which I fear are now very much the definition of it. Irving's concern with the matter had been as follows, brief, but I believe ineffaceable through life.

Adam Hope was a rigid Seceder, as all his kin and connections were, and in and about Annan, equally rigid some of them, less rigid others, were a considerable number of such,—who indeed, some few years hence, combined themselves into an "Annan Burgher Congregation," and set up a Meeting-house and Minister of their own. For the present they had none, nor had thought of such a thing, venerable "Mr Johnston" of Ecclefechan, six miles off, was their only Minister, and to him, duly on Sunday, Adam and a select group were in the habit of pilgriming for Sermon. Less zealous brethren would perhaps pretermit in bad weather, but I suppose it had to be very bad when Adam and most of his group failed to appear. The distance, a six miles twice, was nothing singular in their case, one family, whose streaming plaids, hung up to drip, I remember to have noticed one wet

Sunday, pious Scotch weavers, settled near Carlisle, I was told,—were in the habit of walking fifteen miles twice for their Sermon, since it was not to be had nearer. A curious phasis of things,—quite vanished now, with whatever of divine and good was in it, and whatever of merely human and not so good. From reflection of his own, aided no doubt, or perhaps awakened by study of Adam Hope and his example (for I think there would not be direct speech or persuasion from Adam in such a matter), the boy Edward joined himself to Adam's pilgriming group, and regularly trotted by their side to Ecclefechan for Sermon, listening, and occasionally joining in their pious discourse thither and back. He might be then in his tenth year, distinguished hitherto, both his elder brother John and he, by their wild love of sport, as well as readiness in school lessons. John had quite refused this Ecclefechan adventure, and no doubt done what he could to prevent it, for father and mother looked on it, likewise, with dubious or disapproving eye, "Why run into these ultra courses, sirrah?"—and Edward had no furtherance in it except from within. How long he persisted I do not know. Possibly a year or two,—or occasionally, almost till he went to College. I have heard him speak of the thing long afterwards,—in a generally mirthful way, well recognising what a fantastic, pitifully pedantic, and serio-ridiculous set these road-companions of his mostly were. I myself remember two of them, who were by no means far from me. "Wullie Drummond," a little man with roundish, eagle-eyes, a tailor I almost think, and his blue coat. (But he had a rickety stocking-

weaver, with protruding chin and one leg *too* short for the other short one, who seemed to me an abundantly solemn, and much too infallible and captious little fellow. Edward threw me off, with gusto, outline likenesses of these among the others, and we laughed heartily without malice. Edward's religion in after years, though it ran always in the blood and life of him, was never shrieky or narrow, but even in his last times with their miserable troubles and confusions spoke always with a sonorous deep tone, like the voice of a man, frank and sincere, addressing men. To the last, or almost to the last, I could occasionally raise a genial old Annandale laugh out of him, which is now pathetic to me to remember.

I will say no more of Irving's boyhood. He must have sat, often enough, in Ecclefechan Meeting-house along with me, but I never noticed or knew, and had not indeed heard of him till I went to Annan School (1806, a new "Academy" forsooth, with Adam Hope for "English Master"), and Irving, perhaps two years before, had left for College. I must bid adieu, also, to that poor Temple of my Childhood, to me more sacred at this moment than perhaps the biggest Cathedral then extant could have been. Rude, rustic, bare, no Temple in the world was more so,—but there were sacred lambencies, tongues of authentic flame from Heaven, which kindled what was best in one, what has not yet gone out. Strangely vivid to me some twelve or twenty of those old faces whom I used to see every Sunday, whose names, employments, precise dwelling-places, I never knew, but whose portraits

are yet clear to me as in a mirror,—their heavy-laden, patient, ever-attentive faces, fallen solitary, most of them, children all away, wife away for ever (or it might be wife still there, one such case I well remember, wife constant like a shadow and grown very like her old man), the thrifty, cleanly poverty of these good people, their well-saved old coarse clothes (*tailed* waistcoats down to mid-thigh, a fashion quite dead twenty years before) all this I occasionally see as with eyes,—sixty or sixty-five years off,—and hear the very voice of my Mother upon it, whom sometimes I would be questioning about these persons of the drama, and endeavouring to describe and identify them to her, for that purpose Oh, ever-miraculous Time, O Death, O Life!

Probably it was in 1808, April or May, after College time, that I first saw Irving. I had got over my worst miseries in that doleful and hateful "Academy" life of mine (which lasted three years in all), had begun, in *spite* of precept, to strike about me, to defend myself by hand and voice,<sup>1</sup> had made some comradeship with one or two of my age, and was reasonably becoming alive in the place and its interests—I remember to have felt some human curiosity and satisfaction, when the noted Edward Irving, English-master Hope escorting, introduced himself in our Latin Class-room, one bright forenoon

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle writes, in 1866 "Mythically *true* is what Sartor says of the school-fellows and not half of the truth. Unspeakable is the damage that has been done out of those coarse unguided tyrannous cubs,—and yet how I revolted against them and gave stroke for stroke, as my Mother, in her great love of peace and of my best interests, would have imprudently forbidden me to do."





that time totally non-extant to me), for the one particular I clearly recollect was something from Irving about new doctrines, by somebody (doubtless Leslie), "concerning the circle," which last word he pronounced "*circul*," with a certain *preciosity*, which was noticeable slightly in other parts of his behaviour. Shortly after this of "*circul*," he courteously (had been very courteous all the time, and unassuming in the main), made his bow, and the interview melted instantly away. For seven years I don't remember to have seen Irving's face again.

Seven years come and gone,—it was now the winter of 1815,—I had myself been in Edinburgh College, and above a year ago had duly quitted it, had got (by competition at Dumfries, summer 1814) to be "Mathematical Master" in Annan Academy, with some potential outlook on Divinity as ultimatum (a *rural* "Divinity Student," visiting Edinburgh for a few days each year, and "delivering" certain "Discourses," six years of that would bring you to the Church-gate, as four years of *continuous* "Divinity Hall" would,—unlucky only that, in my case, I had never had the least enthusiasm for the business, and there were even grave prohibitive doubts more and more rising ahead) both branches of my situation flatly contradictory to all ideals or wishes of mine, especially the Annan one, as the closely actual and the daily and hourly pressing on me, while the other lax theoretic, still well ahead, and perhaps avoidable. One attraction, one only, there was in my Annan business. I was supporting myself by earning some few pounds of my poor £60 or

£70 annually, against a rainy day), and not a burden to my ever-generous Father any more, but in all other points of view, I was abundantly lonesome, uncomfortable and out of place there. Didn't go and visit the people there ("ought to have pushed myself in a little, and sought or silently *invited* invitations," such *then* form of social politeness,—which I was far too shy and proud to be able for), had the character of morose, dissocial, etc etc.,—in short, thoroughly detested my function and position, though understood to be honestly doing the duties of it, and held for solacement and company to the few Books I could command, and an accidental friend or two I had in the neighbourhood (Mr Church of Hitchill, and his wife, Rev Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, and ditto, these were the two bright and brightest houses for me, my thanks to them, now and always!)—As to my Schoolmaster function it was never said I *misdid* it much ("a clear and correct" expositor and enforcer) but from the first, especially with such adjuncts, I disliked it, and by swift degrees grew to hate it more and more. Some four years, in all, I had of it, two in Annan, two in Kirkcaldy (under much improved *social* accompaniments),—and at the end, my solitary desperate conclusion was fixed, That I, for my own part, would prefer to perish in the ditch, if necessary, rather than continue living by such a trade—and peremptorily gave *it* up accordingly. This long preface will serve to explain the small passage of collision that occurred between Irving and me on our first meeting in this world.

I had heard much of Irving all along, how

distinguished in studies, how splendidly successful as Teacher, how two Professors had sent him out to Haddington, and how his new Academy and new methods were illuminating and astonishing everything there (alas! there was one little Pupil he had there, with her prettiest little "*penna, pennæ*" from under the table, and "let *me* be a boy, too, Papa!"<sup>1</sup>—who was to be of endless moment, and alone was of any moment to me in all that!)—I don't remember any malicious envy whatever towards this great Irving of the distance for his greatness in study and learning I certainly might have had a tendency, hadn't I struggled against it, and tried to make it emulation, "Do the like, do thou the like under difficulties!" As to his Schoolmaster success, I cared little about that, and easily flung that out [when] it came across me. But naturally all this betrumpeting of Irving to me (in which I could sometimes trace some touch of malice to myself) had not awakened in me any love towards this victorious man "*ich gönnte ihm*," as the Germans phrase it, but in all strictness nothing *more*.

About Christmas time, 1815, I had gone with great pleasure to see Edinburgh again, and read in Divinity Hall a Latin Discourse ("*Exegesis* they call it there) on the question, "*Num detur Religio naturalis?*" It was the second, and proved to be the last, of my performances on that theatre, my first, an English Sermon on the words, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now," etc., a very vocal and flowery sentimental Piece, had been achieved in 1814, prior to or few months after

<sup>1</sup> See *note*, p. 73.

my leaving for Annan Piece second too, I suppose, was weak enough, but I still remember the kind of innocent satisfaction I had in turning it into Latin in my solitude, and my slight and momentary (by no means deep or sincere) sense of pleasure in the bits of "compliments" and flimsy "approbations," from comrades and Professors on both these occasions. Before Christmas Day, I had got rid of my "Elegesis," and had still a week of holiday ahead for old acquaintances and Edinburgh things, which was the real charm of my official errand thither.

One night, I had gone over to Rose Street to a certain Mr (afterwards Dr) Waugh's there,—who was a kind of maternal cousin or half-cousin of my own, had been my school-comrade (several years older), *item* my predecessor in the Annan "Mathematical Mastership" (*immediate* successor, he, of Morley), and a great favourite in Annan Society in comparison with some,—and who, though not without gifts, proved gradually to be intrinsically a good deal of a fool, and by his insolvencies and confused futilities, as "Doctor" there in his native place, has left a kind of remembrance, ludicrous, partly contemptuous, though not without kindness too, and even something of respect. His Father, with whom I had been boarded while a scholar at Annan, was one of the most respectable and yet laughable of mankind, a ludicrous caricature of originality, honesty, and faithful discernment and practice, all in the awkward form,—took much care of his money, however, which this his only son had now inherited, and did not keep very long. Of

Waugh senior, and even of Waugh junior, there might be considerable gossiping and quizzical detailing, they failed not to rise now and then, especially Waugh senior did not, between Irving and me, always with hearty ha-ha's, and the finest recognition on Irving's part when we came to be companions afterwards—but whither am I running with so interminable a preface to one of the smallest incidents conceivable!

I was sitting in Waugh junior's that evening, not too vigorously conversing, when Waugh's door went open, and there stepped in Irving and one Nichol, a Mathematical Teacher in Edinburgh, an intimate of his, a shrewd, merry, and very social kind of person (whom I did not then know, except by name). Irving was over, doubtless, from Kirkcaldy on his holidays, and had probably been dining with Nichol. The party was duly welcomed, to myself not unwelcome, though somewhat alarming. Nichol, I perceived, might be by some three or four years the eldest of us, a sharp man, with lips rather quizzically close, I was by some three or four years the youngest, and here was Trismegistus Irving a notorious bashful, while poor I was so much the reverse. The conversation, in a minute or two, became quite special and my unwilling self the centre of it. Irving directing upon me a whole series of questions about urban matters social or domestic, of which I knew little, and had little to say, though I strove politely to be successful, but I could not. In the good Irving there was a certain amount of vanity, not was there in him, I am sure, the slightest notion to hurt me or be

tyrannous to me (far the reverse his mood, at all times, towards all men !)—but there was, I conjecture, something of conscious unquestionable superiority, of careless natural *de haut en bas*, which fidgeted on me, and which might be rendering my answers more and more succinct. Nay, my small knowledge itself was failing, and I had, more than once, on certain points (as “Has Mrs —— got a baby? Is it son or daughter?” and the like) to answer candidly, “I don’t know.” I think three or two such answers to such questions had followed in succession, when Irving, feeling uneasy, and in a dim manner that the game was going wrong, answered in gruffish yet not ill-natured tone “You seem to know nothing!” To which I, with prompt emphasis, somewhat provoked, replied, “Sir, by what right do you try my knowledge in this way? Are you grand inquisitor, or have you authority to question people, and cross-question, at discretion? I have had no interest to inform myself about the births in Annan, and care not if the process of birth and generation there should cease and determine altogether!”—“A bad example that,” cried Nichol, breaking into laughter “that would never do for me” (a fellow that needs pupils)! And laughed heartily, joined by Waugh, by perhaps Irving himself in a sort,—so that the thing passed off more smoothly than might have been expected, though Irving of course felt a little hurt, and I think did not altogether hide it from me, while the interview still lasted, which was only a short while. This was my first meeting with the man whom I had afterwards, and very soon, such cause to love. We never spoke

of this small unpleasant passage of fence, I believe, and there never was another like it between us in the world. Irving did not want some due heat of temper, and there was a kind of joyous swagger traceable in his manners, in this prosperous young time, but the basis of him at all times was fine manly sociality, and the richest truest good-nature. Very different from the new friend he was about picking up. No swagger in this latter, but a want of it which was almost still worse. Not sanguine and diffusive, he, but biliary and intense,—“far too sarcastic for a young man,” said several in the years now coming.

Within six or eight months of this, probably about the end of July 1816, happened a new meeting with Irving. Adam Hope's poor old Wife had died on a sudden, I went up, the second or third evening, to testify my silent condolence with the poor old man (can still remember his gloomy look, speechless, and the thankful pressure of his hand) a number of people were there, among the rest, to my surprise, Irving (home on his Kirkcaldy holidays, no doubt), who seemed to be kindly taking a sort of lead in the little managements. He conducted worship, I remember, “taking of the Book,” which was the only fit thing we could settle to, and he did it in a free-flowing, modest and altogether appropriate manner,—“*præsenting*” (or leading off the Psalm) too himself, his voice melodiously strong, his tune *St Paul's*, truly sung,—which was a new merit in him to me, quite beyond my own capacities at that time. If I had been in doubts about his reception of me, after that of Rose Street, Edin-

burgh, he quickly and for ever ended them, by a friendliness which, on wider scenes, might have been called chivalrous. At first sight he heartily shook my hand, welcomed me as if I had been a valued old acquaintance, almost a brother, and before my leaving, after worship was done, came up to me again, and with the frankest tone said, "You are coming to Kirkcaldy to look about you in a month or two you know I am there, my house and all that I can do for you is yours,—two Annandale people must not be strangers in Fife!"—The 'doubting Thomas' durst not quite believe all this, so chivalrous was it, but felt pleased and relieved by the fine and sincere tone of it, and thought to himself, "Well, it would be pretty!"—But to understand the full chivalry of Irving, know first what my errand to Kirkcaldy now was.

Several months before this, rumours had come of some break-up in Irving's triumphant Kirkcaldy kingdom. "A terribly severe master, isn't he? Brings his pupils on amazingly, yes truly, but at such an expense of cruelty to them, very proud, too, no standing of him!"—*him*, the least cruel of men, but *expected* and *obliged* to go at high-pressure speed, and no resource left but that of spurring on the laggard—in short, a portion, perhaps between a third and fourth part, of Irving's Kirkcaldy patrons, feeling these griefs, and finding small comfort or result in complaining to Irving, had gradually determined to be off from him, and had hit upon a resource which they thought would serve. "Buy off the old Parish Head-Schoolmaster," they said, "let Hume have his £25 of salary, and



go, the lazy, effete old creature we will apply again to Professors Christison and Leslie, the same who sent us Irving, to send us *another* 'Classical and Mathematical,' who can start fair"—And accordingly, by a letter from Christison (who had never noticed me while in his class, nor could distinguish me from another "Mr *Irving* Carlyle," an older, considerably bigger boy, with flaming red hair, wild buck-teeth, and scorched complexion, and the *worst* Latinist of all my acquaintance,—so '*dark*' was the good Professor's 'class-room,' physically and otherwise),—I learnt, much to my surprise and gratification, "That Professor Leslie had been with him, that etc etc. (as above), and, in brief, that I was the nominee if I would accept." Several letters passed on the subject, and it had been settled, shortly before this meeting with Irving, that I was, in my near Vacation time (end of August) to visit Kirkcaldy, take a personal view of everything, and then say Yes, if I could, as seemed likely

Thus stood matters when Irving received me in the way described. Noble, I must say, when you put it altogether! Room for plenty of the vulgarest peddling feelings there was, and there must still have been between us, had either of us, especially had Irving, been of Pedlar nature. And I can say there could no two Kaisers, not Charlemagne and Barbarossa, had they neighboured one another in the Empire of Europe, been more completely rid of all that *sordid*, than were we two Schoolmasters in the Burgh of Kirkcaldy. I made my visit (August coming), which was full of interest to me, saw St Andrews etc, saw

a fine, frank, wholesome-looking people of the burgher grandees, liked Irving more and more,—and settled to return in a couple of months “for good,” which I may well say it *was*, thanks to Irving principally !

George Irving, Edward's youngest brother (who died in London as M.D. beginning practice, about 1833), had met me, as he returned from his lessons, while I *first* came along the street of Kirkcaldy on the sunny afternoon (August 1816), and with blithe looks and words had pointed out where his Brother lived (a biggish simple house on the sands) The *when* of my first call there I do not now remember, but have still brightly in mind how exuberantly good Irving was, how he took me into his Library, a rough, littery, but considerable collection, and said, cheerily flinging out his arms, “Upon all these, you have *will and waygate*,” an expressive Annandale phrase of the completest welcome, which I failed not of using by and by I also recollect lodging for a night or two nights with him about that time,—bright moonshine, waves all dancing and glancing out of window, and beautifully humming and lullabying on that fine long sandy beach, where he and I so often walked and communed afterwards From the first, we honestly liked one another, and grew intimate, nor was there ever, while we both lived, any cloud or grudge between us, or an interruption of our feelings for a day or hour Blessed conquest, of a Friend in this world ! That was mainly all the wealth I had for five or six years coming, and it made my life in Kirkcaldy (i.e. till near

1819, I think) a happy season in comparison, and a genially useful Youth itself, healthy well-intending youth, is so full of opulences! I always rather like Kirkcaldy to this day, *Annan* the reverse rather, still, when its *gueuseries* come into my head, and my own solitary *quasi-enchanted* position among them,—unpermitted to kick them into the sea!

Irving's Library was of great use to me Gibbon, Hume, etc etc, I think I must have read it almost through,—inconceivable to me now, with what ardour, with what greedy *velocity*, literally above *ten times* the speed I can now make with any Book Gibbon, in particular, I recollect to have read at the rate of a volume a day (twelve volumes in all), and I have still a fair recollection of it, though seldom looking into it since. It was of all the books perhaps the most impressive on me in my then stage of investigation and state of mind I by no means completely admired Gibbon, perhaps not more than I now do, but his winged sarcasms, so quiet, and yet so conclusively transpiercing, and killing dead, were often admirable potent and illuminative to me, nor did I fail to recognise his grand power of investigating, ascertaining, of grouping and narrating,—though the latter had always, then as now, something of a Drury-Lane character, the colours strong but coarse, and set off by lights from the side-scenes—We had books from Edinburgh College-Library too (I remember Bailly's *Histoire de l'Instruction*, ancient and also modern, which considerably disappointed me), on Irving's shelves were the small Didot French Classics in quantity,

with my appetite sharp I must have read (of French and English, for I don't recollect much Classicality, only something of mathematics in intermittent spasms) a great deal during those years.

Irving himself, I found, was not, nor had been, much of a reader, but he had, with solid ingenuity and judgment, by some briefer process of his own, fished out correctly from many books the substance of what they handled, and of what conclusions they came to, this he possessed, and could produce, in an *honest* manner always, when occasion came — he delighted to hear me give accounts of my reading, which were often enough a theme between us, and to me as well a pleasant and profitable one, — he had gathered, by natural sagacity and insight, from conversation and inquiry, a great deal of practical knowledge, or information on things extant round him, which was quite defective in me the recluse — we never wanted for instructive and pleasant talk while together. He had a most hearty, if not very refined, sense of the ludicrous, a broad genial laugh in him always ready. His wide just sympathies, his native sagacities, honest-heartedness and good-humour, made him the most delightful of companions. Such colloquies and rich lovings about, in bright scenes, in talk or in silence, I have never had since.

The beach of Kirkcaldy, in summer twilights, a mile of the smoothest sand, with one long wave coming on, gently, steadily, and breaking in gradual *explosion*, accurately gradual, into harmless melodious *white*, at your hand all the way (the *break* of it, rushing along like a mane of foam, beautifully

sounding and advancing, ran from south to north, from West-burn to Kirkcaldy Harbour, through the whole mile's distance) this was a favourite scene, beautiful to me still, in the far-away We roved in the woods, too, sometimes till all was dark I remember very pleasant strolls to Dysart, and once or twice to the Caves and queer old Saltworks of Wemyss Once, on a memorable Saturday, we made pilgrimage, to hear Dr Chalmers at Dunfermline on the morrow It was on the inducting a young *M<sup>r</sup>* Chalmers as Minister there (Chalmers *minimus*, as he soon got named), the great Chalmers was still in the first flush of his long and always high popularity "Let us go and hear him, once more!" said Irving The summer afternoon was beautiful, beautiful exceedingly our solitary walk by Burntisland and the sands and rocks to Inverkeithing,—where we lodged, still in a touchingly beautiful manner (host the Schoolmaster, one Douglas from Haddington, a clever old acquaintance of Irving's, in after years a Radical Editor of mark, whose wife, for thrifty order, admiration of her husband, etc etc, was a model and exemplar) four miles next morning to Dunfermline and its crowded day, Chalmers *Maximus* *not* disappointing,—and the fourteen miles, home to Kirkcaldy, ending in late darkness, in rain, and thirsty fatigue, which were cheerfully borne

Another time, military tents were noticed on the Lomond Hills (on the eastern of the two)

"Trigonometrical Survey!" said we "Ramsden's theodolite, and what not Let us go!" and on Sunday we went. Beautiful the airy prospect

from that eastern Lomond, far and wide five or six tents stood on the top, one a black-stained cooking one, with a heap of coals close by, the rest all closed, and occupants gone,—except one other, partly open at the eaves, through which you could look in, and see a big circular mahogany box (which we took to be the Theodolite), and a saucy-looking cold official gentleman diligently walking for exercise, no observation being possible, though the day was so bright. No admittance, however plenty of fine “County people” had come up, to whom the Official had been coldly monosyllabic,—as to us also he was, polite, with a shade of contempt, and unwilling to let himself into speech. Irving had great skill in these cases, he remarked, and led us into remarking, courteously this and that about the famous Ramsden and his Instrument, about the famous Trigonometrical Survey and so forth, till the Official, in a few minutes, had to melt, invited us exceptionally in for an actual inspection of his Theodolite, which we reverently enjoyed, and saw through it the Signal Column, a great broad plank he told us, on the top of Ben Lomond, sixty miles off, wavering and shivering like a bit of loose tape, so that no observation could be had. We descended the hill, *in fact*, were to lodge in Leslie, other or north side, with the Minister there, where, possibly enough, Irving had engaged to preach for him next day. I do remember a sight of Falkland ruined Palace, black, sternly impressive on me, as we came down, like a black old bit of coffin or “protrusive shin bone,” sticking through from the soil of the dead Past. The Kirk, too, of next day I remember,

and a certain tragical Countess of Rothcs,—she had been a girl at school in London, fatherless, in morning walks in the Regent's Park she had noticed a young gardener, had transiently glanced into him, he into her, and had ended by marrying him, to the horror of Society, and ultimately of herself, I suppose, for he seemed to be a poor little commonplace creature, as he stood there beside her. She was now elderly, a stately woman, of resolute look though slightly sad, and didn't seem to be soliciting pity. Her I clearly remember, but not who preached, or what—and, indeed, both ends of this journey are abolished to me, as if they had never been.

Our voyage to Inchkeith, one afternoon, was again a wholly pleasant adventure, though one of the rashest. There were three of us, Irving's Assistant the third (a hardy, clever kind of man named Donaldson, of Aberdeen origin, Professor Christison's Nephew, whom I always rather liked, but who before long, as he could never burst the shell of expert schoolmastering and gerund-grinding, got parted from me nearly altogether), our vessel was a row-boat belonging to some neighbour, in fact, a mere rowl with two oars in it and a bit of helm, reputed to be somewhat crazy and cranky, hadn't the weather been so fine—nor was Inchkeith our original aim, original aim had been as follows—A certain Mr Glen, Burgher Minister at Annan, with whom I had hitherto boarded there, and been (domestically) very happy in comparison, had since, after painful and most undeserved treatment from his contentious congregation, seen himself obliged to quit the burgh and its nest of a thing altogether, and with

his wife and young family embark on a *Missionary* career, which had been his earliest thought,—as Conscience now reproachfully reminded him, among other considerations. He was a most pure and excellent man, of correct superior intellect, and of much modest piety and amiability. Things were at last all ready, and he and his were come to Edinburgh, to embark for Astrachan,—where or whereabouts, accordingly, he continued diligent, zealous, for many years, and was widely esteemed, not by the missionary classes alone. Irving as well as I had an affectionate regard for Glen, and on a Saturday, eve of Glen's last Sunday in Edinburgh, had come across with me to bid his brave wife and him farewell —Edinburgh, from Saturday afternoon till the last boat on Sunday evening, this was every now and then a cheery little adventure of ours, always possible again, after the due pause. We found the Glens in an Inn in the Grass Market, much hurried about, and only the Mistress, who was a handsome, brave, and cheery-hearted woman, altogether keeping up her spirits. I heard Glen preach, for the last time, in "Peddie's Meeting-house" (large fine place behind Bristo Street), night just sinking as he ended, and the tone of his voice betokening how full the heart was. At the door of Peddie's manse, I stopped to take leave, Mrs Glen alone was there for me (Glen not to be seen farther), she wore her old bright, saucily affectionate smile, fearless, superior to trouble, but, in a moment, as I took her hand for the last time and said, "Farewell, then, good be ever with you," she shot all pale as paper, and



we parted mournfully without a word more. This sudden paleness of the spirited woman stuck in my heart like an arrow. All that night, and for some three days more, I had such a bitterness of sorrow as I hardly recollect otherwise. "Parting *sadder* than by death," thought I (in my foolish inexperience)—"these good people are to live, and we are never to behold each other more!" Strangely, too, after about four days it went quite off, and I felt it no more.—This was perhaps still the third day, at all events it was the day of Glen's sailing for St. Petersburg, while Irving and I went watching from Kirkcaldy sands the Leith ships outward bound, afternoon sunny, tide ebbing, and settled with ourselves which of the big ships was Glen's. "That one, surely," we said at last,— "and it bends so much this way, one might, by smart rowing, cut into it, and have still a word with the poor Glens!" Of nautical conclusions none could be falser, more ignorant but we instantly set about executing it, hailed Donaldson, who was somewhere within reach, shoved "Robie Greg's" poor green-painted, rickety yawl into the waves (Robie a good creature who would rejoice to have obliged us), and pushed out with our best speed, to intercept that outward-bound big ship. Irving I think, though the strongest of us, rather preferred the *felucca* post, then and afterwards, and did not much take the oar when he could honourably help it. His steering, I doubt not, was perfect, but in the course of half an hour it became ludicrously apparent that we were the tortoise chasing the hare, and that we should or could, in no way, ever intercept that big ship. Short

counsel, thereupon, and determination, probably on my hint, to make for Inchkeith at least, and treat ourselves to a visit there.

We prosperously reached Inchkeith, ran ourselves into a wild stony little bay (west end of the Island), and stept ashore towards the Lighthouse which was near Bay, in miniature, was prettily savage, every stone in it, big or little, lying just as the deluges had left them in ages long gone. Whole island was prettily savage. Grass on it mostly wild and scraggy, but equal to the keep of seven cows, some patches, little *bed-quilts* as it were, of weak dishevelled barley trying to grow under difficulties, these, except perhaps a square yard or two of potatoes equally ill off, were the only attempt at crop inhabitants none except these seven cows and the lighthouse-keeper and his family. Comes probably abounded, but these were *feræ naturæ*, and didn't show face. In a slight hollow about the centre of the Island (whole island, I think, is traversed by a kind of hollow, of which our little bay was the western end), were still traceable some ghastly remnants of the "Russian Graves,"—graves from a Russian Squadron which had wintered thereabouts in 1799 (?) and had there buried its dead, Squadron we had often heard talked of still, what foul creatures these Russian sailors were, how (for one thing) in returning from their sprees in Edinburgh at late hours, they used to climb the lamp-posts in Leith Walk, and drink out the train oil, irresistible by vigilance of the police, so that Leith Walk fell ever and anon into a more or less eclipsed condition, during their stay! Some wreck of white wooden

crosses, rank wild grass, and poor sad, grave-hillocks almost abolished, were all of memorial they had left. The Lighthouse was curious to us, the only one I ever saw before or since. The "revolving light," not produced by a single lamp on its axis, but by ten or a dozen of them, all set in a wide glass cylinder, each with its hollow mirror behind it, *cylinder* alone slowly turning,—was quite a discovery to us. Lighthouse-keeper, too, in another sphere of inquiry was to me quite new. By far the most life-weary looking mortal I ever saw,—surely no lover of the picturesque, for in Nature there was nowhere a more glorious view! He had seven cows, too, was well fed, I saw, well clad, had wife and children, fairly eligible-looking, a shrewd healthy Aberdeen native, his lighthouse, especially his cylinder and lamps, all kept shining like a new shilling—a kindly man withal, yet in every feature of face and voice telling you "Behold the victim of unspeakable ennui!" We got from him, down below, refection of the best biscuits and new-milk, I think almost the best in both kinds I have tasted since. A man not greedy of money either—we left him almost sorrowfully, and never heard of him more.

The scene in our little bay, as we were about proceeding to launch our little boat, seemed to me the beautifullest I had ever beheld. Sun just about setting straight in face of us, behind Ben Lomond far away, Edinburgh with its towers, the great silver mirror of the Frith, girt by such a framework of mountains, cities, rocks and fields and wavy landscape on all hands of us, and reaching right under foot (I remember) came a broad pillar as of gold



must have been in 1853. I remember the young Glen's continual importunity, in the midst of my *Friedrich* incipencies, was not always pleasant, and my chief comfort in it was the pleasure which success would give my Mother. Alas, my good Mother did hear of it, but pleasure even in this was beyond her, in the dark valley she was now travelling! When she died (Christmas day, 1853), one of my reflections was, "Too late for *her*, that little bit of kindness, my last poor effort, and it came too late!" That is always a date for it to me. Young Glen, with his too profuse thanks etc., was again rather importunate, poor young soul, he is since dead. His Mother appeared in person, one morning, at my door in Edinburgh (last spring, in those *Rector* hurries and hurlyburlies, now so sad to me), T. Erskine just leading me off somewhither, an aged decent widow, looking kindly on me and modestly thankful, so clinged I could not have recognised a feature of her. How *tragic* to one is the sight of "old friends,"—a thing I always really shrink from, such has my lot been!—

Irving's visits and mine to Edinburgh were mostly together, and had always their attraction for us, in the meeting with old acquaintances and objects of interest, but except from the Books procured, could not be accounted of importance. Our friends were more L.A.-students, cleverish people mostly, but of no culture or information, no aspiration beyond (on the best possible terms) bread and cheese, their talk in good part a little other than gossip and more or less malicious gossip. We lived habitually, by their means, in a kind of Edinburgh element, not in the

still barer Kirkcaldy one, and that was all Irving now and then perhaps called on some City Clergyman, but seemed to have little esteem of them, by his reports to me afterwards I myself, by this time, was indifferent on that head. On one of those visits my last feeble tatter of connection with Divinity Hall affairs or Clerical outlooks was allowed to snap itself, and fall definitely to the ground (Old "Dr Ritchie not at home," when I called to enter myself<sup>1</sup>,—"Good," answered I, "let the omen be fulfilled!") Irving on the contrary was being licensed—probably through *Annan* Presbytery, but I forget the when and where, and indeed conjecture it may have been before my coming to Kirkcaldy<sup>2</sup>. What alone I well remember is his often, and notable preaching, in those Kirkcaldy years of mine. This gave him an interest in conspicuous clergymen (even if stupid), which I had not. Stupid those Edinburgh Clergy were not all by any means, but narrow, ignorant, and barren to us two, they without exception were.

In Kirkcaldy circles (for poor Kirkcaldy had its circles, and even its West-End, much more genial to me than *Annan* used to be) Irving and I seldom or never met, he little frequented them, I hardly at all. The one house, where I often met him, besides his own, was the Manse, Rev Mr Martin's, which was a haunt of his, and where, for his sake partly, I was always welcome. There was a feeble intellectuality current here, the Minister a precise, innocent, didactic kind of man, and I now and then was will-

<sup>1</sup> This was in March 1817

<sup>2</sup> Irving was licensed to preach, at Kirkcaldy, in June 1815

ing enough to step in,—though various boys and girls went cackling about, and Martin himself was pretty much the only item I really liked. The girls were some of them grown up, yet even these, strange to say, in the great rarity of the article and my ardent devotion to it, were without charm to me. Martin himself had a kind of cheery grace and sociality of way (though much afflicted by *dyspepsia*), a clear-minded, brotherly, well-intentioned man, and, bating a certain glimmer of vanity which always looked through, altogether honest, wholesome as Scotch oatmeal<sup>1</sup>

Irving's preachings as a Licentiate (or 'Probationer' waiting for fixed appointment) were always interesting to whoever had acquaintance with him, especially to me, who was his intimate. Mixed with but little of self-comparison or other dangerous ingredient, indeed with loyal recognition on the part of most of us, and without any grudging or hidden envy, we enjoyed the broad potency of his delineations, exhortations and free flowing eloquences, which had all a manly and original turn, and then afterwards there was sure to be, on the part of the public, a great deal of criticising pro and contra, which also had its entertainment for us. From the first, Irving

<sup>1</sup> In the passage omitted here, Carlyle goes on to say that Irving became engaged to Miss Martin, whom he afterwards (in 1823) married, and that Carlyle did not approve of her influence over Irving. It would be superfluous to reprint the passage,—all the more as Carlyle had, in the interval, written while he was a guest in Irving's house in London, a very favourable notice of Mr. Irving, as a prudent judicious housewife, and a very friendly letter to him,—fact which in those dark days Carlyle could not be expected to have forgotten.

read his discourses, but not in a servile manner, and of attitude, gesture, elocution, there was no neglect — his voice was very fine, melodious depth, strength, clearness its chief characteristics, I have heard more pathetic voices, going more direct to the heart, both in the way of indignation and of pity, but recollect none that better filled the ear. He affected the Miltonic or Old-English Puritan style, and strove visibly to imitate it more and more, till almost the end of his career, when indeed it had become his own, and was the language he used in utmost heat of business, for expressing his meaning. At this time, and for years afterwards, there was something of preconceived intention visible in it, in fact of real "affectation," as there could not well help being — to his example also, I suppose, I owe something of my own poor affectations in that matter, which are now more or less visible to me, much repented of or not. We were all taught at that time, by Coleridge etc., that the old English Dramatists, Divines, Philosophers, judicious Hooker, Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, were the genuine exemplars, which I also tried to believe, but never rightly could *as a whole*. The young must learn to speak by imitation of the Older who already do it or have done it — the ultimate rule is, Learn so far as possible to be intelligible and transparent, no notice *taken* of your "style," but solely of what you express by it, this is your clear rule, and if you *have* anything that is not quite trivial to express to your contemporaries, you will find such rule a great deal more difficult to follow than many people think!

On the whole, poor Irving's style was sufficiently



surprising to his hide-bound Presbyterian public, and this was but a slight circumstance to the novelty of the matter he set forth upon them. Actual practice "If this thing is true, why not do it? You had better do it, there will be nothing but misery and ruin in not doing it!"—that was the gist and continual purport of all his discoursing, —to the astonishment and deep offence of hide-bound mankind. There was doubtless something of rashness in the young Irving's way of preaching, nor perhaps quite enough of pure, complete and serious conviction (which ought to have lain *silent* a good while before it took to speaking) in general I own to have felt that there was present a certain inflation or spiritual bombast in much of this, a trifle of unconscious playactorism (highly unconscious, but not quite absent) which had been unavoidable to the brave young prophet and reformer. But brave he was, and bearing full upon the truth, if not yet quite attaining it,—and as to the offence he gave, our withers were unwrung, I for one was perhaps rather entertained by it, and grinned in secret to think of the hides it was piercing!—Both in life and over in Edinburgh, I have known the offence very rampant. Once, in Kirkcaldy Kirk, which was well filled, and all dead-silent under Irving's grand voice, the door of a pew a good way in front of me (ground floor, right-hand as you fronted the Preacher) banged suddenly open, and there bolted out of it a middle-aged or elderly little man (an insignificant Baker, by position), who, with long swift strides, and face and big eyes all in wrath, came tramping and sounding along the flags, close

past my right hand, and vanished out of doors with a slam, Irving quite victoriously disregarding I remember the violently angry face well enough, but not the least what offence there could have been. A kind of, "Who are you, Sir, that dare to tutor *us* in that manner, and harrow up our orthodox quiet skin with your novelties?"—probably that was all—In Irving's Preaching there was present or prefigured, generous opulence of ability in all kinds (except perhaps the very highest kind, not even prefigured?), but much of it was still crude and this was the reception it had, for a good few years to come, indeed, to the very end, he never carried all the world along with him, as some have done with far fewer qualities.

In vacation time, twice over, I made a walking Tour with him. First time, I think (but I cannot fix the chronology exactly, though it must lie in *Letters* still hidden here) was to the Trosachs, and home by Loch Lomond, Greenock, Glasgow etc., many parts of which are still vivid to me. This was probably in 1817<sup>1</sup>. The Tour generally was to be of four, one Pears, who was Irving's house-mate or even landlord, Schoolmaster of Abbotshall, i.e., of 'The Links,' or *southern extra-burghal* part of Kirkcaldy, a cheerful scatter-brained creature, who went ultimately as Preacher or Professor of something to the Cape of Good Hope, and one Brown (James Brown), who had succeeded Irving in Haddington, and was now Tutor somewhere. Tour finally of four, but the full rally was not to be till Stirling, even Pears was gone ahead,—and

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's conjecture is correct. It was in 1817.

Irving and I (after an official dinner with the burghal dignitaries of Kirkcaldy, who strove to be pleasant), set out together, on a gray August evening, by Forth sands towards Torryburn Pears was to have beds ready for us there, and we cheerily walked along, our mostly dark and intricate twenty-two miles but Pears had nothing *ser viccably* ready,—we could not even discover Pears, at that dead hour (two A.M.), and had a good deal of groping and adventuring before a poor Inn opened to us, with two coarse clean beds, in which we instantly fell asleep Pears did in person rouse us next morning about six, but we concordantly met him with mere “ah-ah’s,” and inarticulate hootings of satirical rebuke, to such extent that Pears, conscious of nothing but heroic punctuality, flung himself out into the rain again, in momentary indignant puff, and strode away for Stirling, where we next saw him after four or five hours I remember the squalor of our bedroom, in the dim rainy light, and how little we cared for it, in our opulence of youth the sight of giant Irving, in a shortish shirt, on the sanded floor, drinking patiently a large tankard of “penny-whcep” (the smallest beer in Creation), before beginning to dress, is still present to me as comic, of sublime or tragic the night before, a mysterious great red glow is much more memorable, which had long hung before us in the murky sky, growing gradually brighter and bigger, till at last we found it must be *Carion Iron-works*, on the other side of Forth River, one of the most impressive sights Our march to Stirling was under pouring rain for most part, but I recollect enjoying the romance of

it "Kincardine, Culross (*Cu'ross*), Clackmannan, here they are, then, what a wonder to be here!" The Links of Forth, the Ochills, Grampians, Forth itself, Stirling, lion-shaped, ahead, like a lion couchant with the castle for his crown,—all this was beautiful in spite of rains, welcome too was the inside of Stirling, with its fine warm inn, and the excellent refecton and thorough drying and refitting we got there, Pears and Brown looking pleasantly on, who made a pleasant day of strolling and sight-seeing with us (day now very fine, Stirling all washed), till we marched for Doune in the evening (Brig of Teith, "*voice* of waters," "blue and arrowy Teith,"—Irving and I took that byway, in the dusk), to breakfast in Callander next morning, and get to Loch Katrine in an hour or two more. I have not been in that region again till August last year (four days of magnificently perfect hospitality with Stirling of Keir),—almost surprising to me how mournful it was to 'look on this picture and on that' at an interval of fifty years!—

Irving was in a sort the Captain of our expedition, had been there before, could recommend everything,—was made (unjustly by us) quasi-responsible for everything. The Trosachs I found really grand and impressive, Loch Katrine exquisitely so (my first taste of the beautiful in scenery), not so, any of us, the dirty smoky farm-hut at the entrance, with no provision in it, but bad oatcakes and unacceptable whisky, or the "Mr Stewart" who somewhat royally presided over it, and dispensed these dainties, expecting to be flattered like an independency, as well as paid like an innkeeper. Poor Irving could not

help it —but in fine the rains, the hardships, the ill diet were beginning to act on us all, and I could perceive we were in danger (what I have since found usual) of splitting into two parties, Brown (eight or ten years my senior) leader of the Opposition, myself considerably flattered by him, though *not* seduced by him into factious courses, only led to see how strong poor Pears was for the Government interest! This went to no length, never bigger than a summer cloud, or the incipency of one, but Brown, in secret, would never quite let it die out (a jealous kind of man, I gradually found, had been much commended to us, by Irving, as of superior intellect and honesty, —which qualities I likewise found in him, though with the above abatement), and there were, or were like to be, divisions of vote in the walking Parliament, two against two, and had there not been at this point, by a kind of outward and legitimate reason, what proved very sanatory in the case, an actual division of routes, the folly might have lasted longer and become audible and visible, which it never did. Sailing up Loch Katrine, in the top or unpicturesque part, Irving and Pears settled with us (house fully heard) that only we two should go across Loch Lomond, round by Tarbet, Roseneath, Greenock, they meanwhile making direct for Paisley country (where they had business), and so on stepping out, and paying our boatman, they said adieu, and at once struck leftward, we going straight ahead, rendezvous to be at Glasgow again, on such and such a day. [What feeble trash is all this, ah me, no better than Irving's "penny-whEEP" with the gas rate cut of it! Stop to-day, 4th October 1866]

The heath was bare, trackless, sun going almost down, Brown and I (our friends soon disappearing) had an interesting march, good part of it dark, and flavoured just to the right pitch with something of anxiety and sense of danger. The sinking sun threw his reflexes on a tame-looking House with many windows, some way to our right,—the "*Kharrison of Inversnaid*"<sup>1</sup> (an ancient Anti-*Rob Roy* establishment), as two rough Highland wayfarers had lately informed us, other house or person we did not see, but made for the shoulder of Ben Lomond and the Boatman's Hut, partly, I think, by the Stars. Boatman and Huthold were in bed, but he, with a ragged little Sister or Wife cheerfully roused themselves, cheerfully, and for most part in silence, rowed us across (under the spangled vault of midnight, which with the Lake waters silent as if in deep dream, and several miles broad here, had their due impression on us) correctly to Tarbet, a most hospitable, clean, and welcome little country inn (now a huge "Hotel" I hear,—worse luck to it, with its nasty "Hotel Company, Limited")—On awakening next morning, I heard from below the sound of a churn, prophecy of new genuine butter, or even of ditto rustic butter-milk.

Brown and I did very well on our separate branch of pilgrimage, pleasant walk and talk down to the west margin of the Loch (incomparable among Lochs or Lakes yet known to me), past Smollett's Pillar,<sup>2</sup> emerge pleasantly on Helensburgh, on the

<sup>1</sup> "The Garrison of Inversnaid," in the county of Stirling, about three miles north of Ben Lomond.

<sup>2</sup> A pillar, erected to the memory of Smollett, in 1774, which stands

view of Greenock, and across to Roseneath Manse, where with a Rev Mr Story, not yet quite inducted—whose *Life* has since been published,<sup>1</sup>—who was an acquaintance of Brown's, we were warmly welcomed and well entertained for a couple of days. Story I never saw again,—but he, acquainted in Haddington neighbourhood, saw some time after, incidentally, a certain Bright Figure, to whom I am obliged to him at this moment for speaking favourably of me! "Talent plenty, fine vein of satire in him!" something like that;—I suppose they had been talking of Irving, whom both of them knew and liked well, *Her*, probably, at that time I had still never seen, but she told me long afterwards. We have had Story's Son, *Biographer* and Successor, here once, who considerably resembles him, but is not so smart and clever.

At Greenock I first saw *Steamers* on the water, queer little dumpy things, with a red sail to each (and legible name, "*Defiance*" and such like), bobbing about there, and making continual passages to Glasgow, as their business. Not till about two years later (1819, if I mistake not), did Forth see a Steamer, Forth's first was far bigger than the Greenock ones, and called itself "*The Tug*," being intended for towing ships in those narrow waters, as I have often seen it doing, it still, and no rival or competitor,—till (in 1825) Leith, spurred on by one Paton a kind of scientific Half-pay *Master R.N.*, got up

the "*Leith Tug*," and three other vessels of Dumbarton. I have seen the "*Leith Tug*," a pair of which was written by Dr

John Wilson Crockett, in the *History of Forth* (1840) crown 8vo.

a large finely appointed Steamer, or pair of Steamers, for London, which, so successful were they, all Ports then set to imitating. London alone still held back for a good few years, it was not till about 1840 that Steamers appeared in the river here. London was notably shy of the Steamship, great as are its doings now in that line. An old friend of mine, the late Mr Strachey,<sup>1</sup> has told me that in his school days, he at one time (early in the Nineties I should guess, say 1795) used to see, in crossing Westminster Bridge, a little *model* Steamship paddling to and fro between him and Blackfriars Bridge, with steam-funnel, paddle-wheels, and the other outfit, exhibiting and recommending itself to London and whatever scientific or other spirit of marine adventure London might have,—London entirely dead to the phenomenon, which had to duck under and dive across the Atlantic, before London saw it again when a new generation had risen.<sup>1</sup> The real inventor of steamships, I have learned credibly elsewhere, the maker and proprietor of that fruitless model on the Thames, was Mr Millar, Laird of Dalswinton in Dumfriesshire (Poet Burns's Landlord), who spent his life and his estate in that adventure, and is not now to be heard of in those parts,—having had to sell Dalswinton and die quasi-bankrupt (and I should think broken-hearted) after that completing of his painful invention, and finding of London and mankind dead to it. Millar's assistant and work-hand for many years was John Bell, a joiner in the neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> Late Charles Buller's Uncle. Somersetshire gentleman, ex-Indian, died in 1831, an examiner in the India House. Colleague of John S Mill and his Father there.—T C



village of Thornhill Millar being ruined, Bell was out of work and of connection Bell emigrated to New York, and there, speaking much of his old Master, and glorious unheeded invention, well known to Bell in its outlines or details,—at length, found one Fulton to listen to him, and by "Fulton and Bell" (about 1809), an actual Packet Steamer was got launched, and lucratively plying on the Hudson River, became the miracle of Yankee-land, and gradually of all lands. These I believe are essentially the facts (old Robert M'Queen of Thornhill, Strachey of the India-House, and many other bits of good testimony and of indication, once far apart, curiously coalescing and corresponding for me),—and as, possibly enough, the story is not now known in whole to anybody but myself, it may go in here as a digression, *à propos* of those brisk little Greenock steamers, which I first saw, and still so vividly remember, (little "Defiance" etc, saucily bounding about with their red sails in the sun!) on this my tour with Irving.

Those old three days at Roseneath are all very vivid to me, and marked in white the great blue mountain masses, giant "Cobler" overhanging, bright seas, bright skies, Roseneath new Mansion (still unfinished, and standing as it did, the present Duke of Argyll has told me), the grand old oaks,—and a certain handfast, middle-aged, practical and most polite "Mr Campbell" (the Argyll Factor there), with his two Sisters, excellent lean old ladies, with their wild Highland accent, wiredrawn but genuine good-manners and good principles,—and not least their astonishment, and shrill interjections, at once

of love and fear, over the talk they contrived to get out of me one evening and perhaps another, when we went across to tea—all this is still pretty to me to remember. They are all dead, these good souls (Campbell himself, the Duke told me, died only lately, very old), but they were, to my rustic eyes, of a superior, richly furnished stratum of society, and the new thought that I too might perhaps be ‘one-and-somewhat’ (*Ein und Etwas*) among my fellow-creatures by and by, was secretly very welcome at their hands. We rejoined Irving and Pears at Glasgow (transit, place of meeting utterly forgotten), I remember our glad embarkation in a track-boat towards Paisley by canal, visit preappointed for us at Paisley by Irving, in a good old lady’s house, whose son was Irving’s boarder, the dusty, sunny Glasgow evening, and my friend’s joy to see Brown and me (or *me* and Brown, I might perhaps put it, as *his* thought). Irving was very good and jocund-hearted—most blithe his good old lady, whom I had seen at Kirkcaldy before, and we had a pleasant day or two in those neighbourhoods, the picturesque, the comic, and the genially common all prettily combining, particulars now much forgotten. Pears went to eastward, Dunse, his native country, “born i’ Dunse,” equal in sound to *born a dunce*, as Irving’s laugh would sometimes remind him, ‘opposition party’ (except it were in the secret of Brown’s jealous heart) there was now none. Irving, in truth, was the natural King among us, and his qualities of captaincy in such a matter were indisputable.

Brown, he, and I went by the Falls of Clyde, I do not recollect the rest of our route,—except that

at "New Lanark," a green silent valley, with fine Cotton-works "of David Dale," *turned* by Clyde Water, we called to see Robert Owen, the then incipient Arch-Gomeril's "model school," and thought it (and him, whom we did not see, and knew only by his pamphlets and it) a thing of wind, not worth considering farther,—and that, after sight of the Falls (which probably was next day), Irving came out as Captain in a fine new phase. The Falls were very grand and stormful, nothing to say against the Falls, but at the last of them, or possibly it might be about Bothwell Banks farther on, a woman who officiated as guide and cicerone, most superfluous, unwilling too, but firmly persistent in her purpose, happened to be in the worst humour, did nothing but snap and snarl, and being answered by bits of quiz, towered at length into foam, and intimated she would now bring somebody who would ask us, How we could so treat an unprotected female?—and vanished to seek the champion or champions. As our business was done, and the woman paid too, I own (with shame if needed) my thought would have been to march with decent celerity on our way, not looking back unless summoned to do it, and prudently avoiding discrepant circles of that sort. Not so Irving, who drew himself up to his full height and breadth, cudgel in hand, and stood there, flanked by Brown and me, silently waiting the issue. Issue was, a thickish kind of man, seemingly the woman's husband, a little older than any of us, stepped out with her, calmly enough surveying, and, at respectful distance,—asked "If we would buy any apples? —Upon which, with negatory grin, we did

march I recollect nothing more of this route, except that we visited Lead-hills too, joyfully descended into the mines etc., and that Irving, prior to Annan, must have struck away from us at some point. Brown and I, on arriving at Mainhill, found my dear good Mother in the saddest state, dregs of a bad fever hanging on her,—my profound sorrow at which seemed to be a surprise to Brown, according to his Letters afterwards. With Brown, for a year or two ensuing, I continued to have some not unpleasant correspondence, a conscientious, accurate, clear-sighted, but rather narrow and unfruitful man,—at present Tutor to some Lockhart of Lee, and wintering in Edinburgh, went afterwards to India, as Presbyterian Clergyman somewhere, and shrank gradually, we heard, into complete aridity, ‘phrenology’ etc., and before long died there. He had, after Irving, been my dear little Jeannie’s Teacher and Tutor (she never had but these two), and the name of her, like a bright object far above *me* like a star, occasionally came up between them, on that Journey, I dare say, as at other times. She retained a child’s regard for James Brown, and, in this house, he was always a memorable object.

My second Tour with Irving had nothing of *curious* in it, a mere walk homeward through the Peebles-Moffat moor country, and is not worth going into in any detail. The region was without roads, often without foot-tracks, had no vestige of inn, so that there was a kind of knight-errantry in threading your way through it, not to mention the romance that naturally lay in its Ettricks and Yarrows, and old melodious songs and traditions. We walked

up Meggat Water to beyond the sources, emerged into Yarrow, not far above St. Mary's Loch, a charming secluded shepherd country, with excellent shepherd population,—nowhere setting up to be picturesque, but everywhere honest, comely, well done-to, peaceable and useful, nor anywhere without its solidly characteristic features, hills, mountains, clear rushing streams, cosy nooks and homesteads, all of fine rustic type, and presented to you *in natura*, not as in a Drury Lane with Stage-lights and for a purpose. The vast and yet not savage solitude as an impressive item,—long miles from farm to farm, or even from one shepherd's cottage to another, no company to you but the rustle of the grass underfoot, the tinkling of the brook, or the voices of innocent primeval things. I repeatedly walked through that country, up to Edinburgh and down, by myself, in subsequent years—and nowhere remember such affectionately sad, and thoughtful, and in fact interesting and salutary journeys. I have had days clear as Italy (as in this Irving case), days moist and dripping, overhung with the infinite of silent gray,—and perhaps the latter kind were the preferable, in certain moods. You had the world and its waste imbroglios of joy and woe, of light and darkness, to yourself alone. You could strip barefoot, if it suited better, carry shoes and socks over shoulder hung on your stick. Clean shirt and comb were in your pocket, *omnia mea mecum porto*. You lodged with shepherds who had clean solid cottages, wholesome eggs, milk, oatbread, porridge, clean blankets to their beds, and a great deal of human sense and unadulterated natural politeness,

*canty*, shrewd and witty fellows, when you set them talking, knew, from their hill-tops, every bit of country between Forth and Solway, and all the shepherd inhabitants within fifty miles,—being a kind of confraternity of shepherds from father to son. No sort of peasant labourers I have ever come across seemed to me so happily situated, morally and physically, well-developed, and deserving to be happy as these shepherds of the Cheviots. *O fortunati nimium!*—But perhaps it is all altered, not a little, now, as I, sure enough, am, who speak of it!

Irving's course and mine, from bonny Yarrow onwards by Loch Skene and the *Gray Mare's Tail* (finest of all cataracts, lonesome, simple, grand, that are now in my memory) down into Moffatdale where we lodged in a Shepherd's Cottage, must have been near "Caplegill," old Walter Welsh's farm, though I knew not of it then! From the shepherd people came good talk, Irving skilful to elicit it—topography, Poet Hogg (who was then a celebrity), "*Shura* Scott" (famed Sir Walter, "Sheriff of Selkirkshire," whose borders we had just emerged from), then gradually stores of local anecdote, personal history, etc. these good people never once asked *us*, Whence, Whither, or What are you, but waited till perhaps it voluntarily came, as generally chanced. Moffatdale, with its green holms and hill-ranges ("Carriferan saddleyoke," actual quasi-saddle, "you can sit astride anywhere, and a stone dropped from either hand will roll and bound a mile" one of the prettiest hills), with its pleasant groves and farmsteads, voiceful limpid waters rushing fast *for Auvan* all was

very beautiful to us, but what I most remember is Irving's arrival at Mainhill with me to tea,—and how between my Father and him there was such a mutual recognition. My Father had seen Loch Skene, the Gray Mare's Tail etc in his youth, and now gave, in few words, such a picture of it all, forty years after sight, as charmed and astonished Irving, who, on his side, was equally unlike a common man—definite, true, intelligent, frankly courteous, faithful in whatever he spoke about. My Father and he saw one another (on similar occasions) twice or thrice again, always with increasing esteem,—and I rather think it was from Irving on this particular occasion that I was first led to compare my Father with other men, and see how immensely superior he, altogether unconsciously, was. No intellect equal to his, in certain important respects, have I ever met with in the world. Of my Mother, Irving never made any reading for himself, or could well have made, but only through me, and that too he believed in and loved well. Generous, all-recognising Irving!—

The Kirkcaldy population were a pleasant honest kind of fellow mortals, something of quietly fruitful, of good *Old-Scotch* in their works and ways, more *circumlocutory*, peaceably fixed, and almost genial, in their mode of life, than I had been used to in the Border home-land. I like generally we liked. Those ancient little burghs and sea-villages, with their poor little havens, 'salt-pans,' and weatherbeaten bits of Cyclopean breakwaters and rude innocent machineries, in 'till kindly to me to think of,—Kirkcaldy itself had many looms, had Baltic trade, Whale-fishery etc,

and was a solidly diligent, yet by no means a panting, puffing, or in any way gambling "Lang Toun,"—its flaxmill-machinery, I remember, was turned mainly by *wind*, and curious blue-painted wheels, with oblique vans (how working I never saw), rose from many roofs for that end. We, I in particular, always rather liked the people,—though from the distance chiefly, chagrined and discouraged by the sad *trade* one had! Some hospitable human fire-sides I found, and these were at intervals a fine little element, but in general we were but onlookers (the one real "Society," our books and our few selves),—not even with the bright "young ladies" (what was a sad feature) were we generally on speaking terms. By far the cleverest and brightest, however, an Ex-pupil of Irving's, and genealogically and otherwise (being poorish, proud, and well-bred) rather a kind of alien in the place, I did at last make acquaintance with (at Irving's first, I think, though she rarely came thither), some acquaintance,—and it might easily have been more, had she, and her Aunt, and our economic and other circumstances liked! She was of the fair-complexioned, softly elegant, softly grave, witty and comely type, and had a good deal of gracefulness, intelligence and other talent. Irving too, it was sometimes thought, found her very interesting, could the Miss-Martin bonds have allowed, which they never would. To me, who had only known her for a few months, and who within a twelve or fifteen months saw the last of her, she continued for perhaps some three years a figure hanging more or less in my fancy, on the usual romantic, or latterly quite elegiac and silent terms,



and to this day there is in me a goodwill to her, a candid and gentle pity for her, if needed at all. She was of the Aberdeenshire Gordons, a far-off Huntly, doubt it not, "Margaret Gordon," born I think in New Brunswick, where her Father, probably in some official post, had died young and poor,—her *accent* was prettily English, and her voice very fine—an aunt (widow in Fife, childless, with limited resources, but of frugal cultivated turn, a lean, proud elderly dame, once a "Miss Gordon" herself, sang Scotch songs beautifully, and talked shrewd *Aberdeensh* in accent and otherwise) had adopted her, and brought her hither over seas and here, as Irving's Ex-pupil, she now cheery though with dim outlooks, was Irving saw her again in Glasgow, one summer, touring etc., he himself accompanying joyfully,—*not* joining (so I understood it) the retinue of *suitors* or potential ditto, rather perhaps indicating gently, "No, I must not!" for the last time. A year or so after, we heard the fair Margaret had married some rich insignificant Aberdeen Mr Something, who afterwards got into Parliament, thence out "to Nova Scotia" (or so) "as Governor," and I heard of her no more,—except that lately she was still living about Aberdeen, childless, as the "Dowager Lady" — her Mr Something having got knighted before dying. Poor Margaret! Speak to her, since the "good bye, then" at Kirkcaldy in 1819, I never did or could. I saw her, recognisably to me, here in her London time (1840 or so), *then*, once with her maid in Piccadilly, promenading, little altered, a second time that same year or next, on horseback both of us and *meeting* in the gate of Hyde Park.

when her *eyes* (but that was all) said to me almost touchingly, "Yes, yes, that is you!"— —Enough of that old matter, which but half concerns Irving and is now quite extinct.

In the space of two years, or rather more, we had all got tired of schoolmastering, and its mean contradictions and poor results, Irving and I quite resolute to give *it* up for good, the headlong Pears disinclined for it on the there terms longer, and in the end of 1819 (or '18? at this hour I know not which, and the old *Letters* that would show are too deep-hidden),<sup>1</sup> we all three went away, Irving and I to Edinburgh, Pears to his own "East Country,"—whom I never saw again with eyes, poor good rattling soul. Irving's outlooks in Edinburgh were not of the best, considerably checkered with dubiety, opposition, or even flat disfavour in some quarters, but at least they were far superior to mine—and indeed I was beginning my four or five most miserable, dark, sick and heavy-laden years, Irving, after some staggerings aback, his seven or eight healthiest and brightest. He had, I should guess, as one item, several good hundreds of money to wait upon. My *peculium* I don't recollect, but it could not have exceeded £100, I was without friends, experience, or connection in the sphere of human business, was of shy humour, proud enough and to spare,—and had begun my long curriculum of *dyspepsia*, which has never ended since!

Irving lived in Bristo Street, more expensive rooms than mine, and used to give breakfasts to Intellectualities he fell in with,—I often a guest with

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle left Kirkcaldy in November 1818

them. They were but stupid Intellectualities, and the talk I got into there did not please me even then, though it was well enough received. A visible gloom occasionally hung over Irving, his old strong sunshine only getting out from time to time. He gave lessons in mathematics, once for a while, to Captain Basil Hall,<sup>1</sup> who had a kind of thin celebrity then, and did not seem to love too well that small lion or his ways with him. Small lion came to propose for me, at one stage, wished me to go out with him "to Dunglas," and there do "*lunars*" in his name, he looking on, and learning of me what would come of its own will. "*Lunars*" meanwhile were to go as his to the Admiralty, testifying there what a careful studious Captain he was, and help to get him promotion,—so the little wretch smilingly told me I remember the figure of him in my dim lodging, as a gray, crackling, sniggering spectre, one dusk, endeavouring to seduce me by affability, in lieu of liberal wages, into this adventure. Wages, I think, were to be smallish ("so poor are we"), but then "the great Playfair is coming on visit,—you will see Professor Playfair!" I had not the least notion of such an enterprise, on these shining terms, and Captain Basil with his great Playfair *in posse*, vanished for me into the shades of dusk for good. I don't think Irving ever had any other pupil but this Basil, for perhaps a three months. I had not even Basil, though private-teaching, to me the poorer, was much more desirable, if it would please to come, which it generally would not in the least. I was timorously turning towards "Literature" too, thought in

<sup>1</sup> Died in 1814 aged 56

audacious moments I might perhaps earn some trifle that way, by honest labour somehow, to help my finance · but in that too I was painfully sceptical (talent and opportunity alike doubtful, alike incredible to me, poor down-pressed soul), and in fact there came little enough of produce or finance to me from that source, and for the first years absolutely none, in spite of my diligent and desperate efforts which are sad to me to think of even now "*Acti labores*," yes, but of such a futile, dismal, lonely, dim and chaotic kind, in a scene all ghastly-*chaos* to one, sad, dim and ugly as the shores of Styx and Phlegethon, as a nightmare-dream become real! No more of that, it did not conquer me, or quite kill me, thank God — Irving thought of nothing as ultimate but a Clerical career, obstacles once overcome, in the meanwhile, we heard of robust temporary projects,—"Tour to Switzerland," glaciers, Geneva, "Lake of Thun," very grand to think of, was one of them,—none of which took effect

I forget how long it was till the then famed Trismegistus Dr Chalmers, fallen in want of an Assistant, cast his eye on Irving I think it was in the summer following our advent to Edinburgh, I heard duly about it How Rev Andrew Thomson, famous *malleus* of Theology in that time, had mentioned Irving's name, had privately engaged to get Chalmers a hearing of him in his, Andrew's, Church,<sup>1</sup> how Chalmers heard *incognito*, and there ensued negotiation,—once I recollect transiently seeing

<sup>1</sup> This was in St George's Church, Edinburgh, in July 1819, Irving began his work as Assistant to Dr Chalmers in October of the same year

the famed Andrew on occasion of it (something Irving had forgotten with him, and wished me to call for), and what a lean-minded, iracund, ignorant kind of man Andrew seemed to me, also, much more vividly, in Autumn following, one fine airy October day, in Annandale, Irving, on foot, on his way to Glasgow for a month of actual trial, had come by Mainhill, and picked me up, to walk with him seven or eight miles farther into "Dryfe Water" (ie valley watered by clear swift *Dryfe*, quasi-"Drive,"—so impetuous and swift is it), where [was] a certain witty comrade of ours, one Frank Dixon, Preacher at once and Farmer (only son and heir of his Father who had died in that latter capacity) We found Frank, I conclude, though the whole is now dim to me till we arrived all three, Frank and I to set Irving on his road to Moffat and bid him good speed, on the top of a hill, commanding all Upper-Annandale and the grand mass of Moffat hills, where we paused thoughtful a few moments The blue sky was beautifully spotted with white clouds, which, and their shadows on the wide landscape, the wind was beautifully chasing "Like Life!" I said, with a kind of emotion, on which Irving silently pressed my arm, with the hand near it or perhaps on it, and, a moment after, with no word but his farewell and ours, strode swiftly away A mail-coach would find him at Moffat that same evening (after his walk of about thirty miles), and carry him to Glasgow to sleep And the curtains ink run on Frank and me at this time

Frank was a notable kind of man, and one of the memorabilities doubtless to Irving as well as me

A most quizzing, merry, entertaining, guileless and unmalicious man, with very considerable logic, reading, contemptuous observation and intelligence, much real tenderness too, when not obstructed, and a mournful true affection, especially for the friends he had lost by death! No mean impediment *there* any more (that was it),—for Frank was very sensitive, easily moved to something of envy, and as if surprised where contempt was not possible — easy banter was what he habitually dwelt in, for the rest, an honourable, bright amiable man alas, and his end was very tragic! I have hardly seen a man with more opulence of conversation,—wit, fantastic bantering ingenuity, and genial human sense of the ridiculous in men and things Charles Buller, perhaps,—but he was of far more refined, delicately managed, and less copious tone (finer by nature, I should say, as well as by culture, though perhaps still more genial of sense, when I now reflect), and had nothing of the wild "*Annandale-Rabelais*" turn which had grown up, partly of will, and at length by industry as well, in poor Frank Dixon in the valley of Dryfe, amid his little stock of Books and rustic Phenomena. A slightly built man, nimble-looking and yet lazy-looking, our Annandale Rabelais, thin, neatly expressive aquiline face, gray genially laughing eyes, something sternly serious and resolute in the squarish fine brow, nose specially aquiline, thin and rather small,—I well remember the play of point and nostrils there, while his wild home-grown *Gargantuisms* went on. He rocked rather, and negligently wriggled, in walking or standing, something slightly twisted in the spine,

I think, but he made so much small involuntary tossing and gesticulation while he spoke or listened, you never noticed the twist. What a childlike and yet half imp-like volume of true laughter lay in Frank, how he would fling back his fine head, left cheek up, not himself laughing much or loud *ever*, but showing you such continents of inward gleesome mirth and victorious mockery of the dear stupid ones who had crossed his sphere of observation! A wild roll of sombre eloquence lay in him, too, and I have seen in his sermons sometimes, that brow and aquiline face grow dark, sad, and thunderous like the Eagle of Jove. I always liked poor Frank, and he me heartily,—after having tried to banter me down, and recognised the mistake, which he loyally did for himself, and never repeated. We had much innocently pleasant talk together first and last.

His end was very tragic,—like that of a sensitive gifted man too much based on laughter! Having no good prospect of Kirk promotion in Scotland (I think his Edinburgh resource had been mainly that of teaching under Mathematical Nichol for certain hours daily), he, perhaps about a year after Irving went to Glasgow, had accepted some offer to be Presbyterian Chaplain and Preacher to the Scotch in *Bermuda*, and lifted anchor thither, with many regrets and good wishes from us all. I did not correspond with him there, my own mood and posture being still so dreary and empty. But, before Irving left Glasgow, news came to me (from Irving, I believe) that Frank, struck quite miserable, and lene of heart and nerves, by dyspepsia and dispirit-

ment, was home again, or on his way home, to Dryfesdale, there to lie useless,—Irving recommending me to do for him what kindness I could, and not remember that he used to disbelieve, and be ignorantly cruel, in my own dyspeptic tribulations. This I did not fail of, nor was it burdensome, but otherwise, while near him in Annandale.

Frank was far more wretched than I had been, sunk in spiritual dubieties too, which I, by that time, was getting rid of. He had brought three young Bermuda gentlemen home with him as pupils (had been much a favourite in Society there), with these, in his rough Farmhouse,—“Belkathill” (Bell-top Hill? near Hook, head part of the pleasant vale of Dryfe),—he settled himself to live. Farm was *his*, but in the hands of a rough-spun Sister and her ploughing Husband, who perhaps were not overglad to see Frank return, with new potentiality of ownership, if he liked,—which truly, I suppose, he never did. They had done some joinering, plank-flooring, in the Farmhouse, which was weather-tight, newish though strait and dim, and there, on rough rustic terms, perhaps with a little disappointment to the young gentlemen, Frank and his Bermudians lived, for some years. He had a nimble quiet pony, rode, latterly (for the Bermudians did not stay above a year or two), much about among his cousinry or friends, always halting and bating with me, when it could be managed. I had at once gone to visit him, found Belkathill on the new terms as interesting as ever. A comfort to me to administer some comfort, interesting even to compare dyspeptic *notes* besides, Frank, by degrees,



would kindle into the old coruscations, and talk as well as ever. I remember some of those visits to him, still more the lonely silent rides thither, as humanly impressive, wholesome, not unpleasant. Especially after my return from Buller Tutorship, and my first London visit, when I was at Hoddam Hill, idly high and dry like Frank (or only translating *German Romance*, etc), and had a horse of my own. Frank took considerably to my Mother, talked a great deal of his bitter Byronic Scepticism to her,—and seemed to feel, like oil poured into his wounds, her beautifully pious contradictions of him and it. “Really likes to be contradicted, poor Frank!” she would tell me afterwards. He might be called a genuine bit of rustic Dignity, modestly, frugally, in its simplest expression, gliding about among us there. This lasted till perhaps the beginning of 1826,—I don’t remember him at Scotsbrig ever, I suppose the *Lease* of his Farm may have run out that year, not renewed, and that he was now farther away. After my Marriage, perhaps two years after, from Craigenputtock I wrote to him, but never got the least answer, never saw him or *distinctly* heard of him more. Indistinctly I did, with a shock, hear of him once, and then a second final time,—thus. My brother Junie (youngest brother of us, ten years my junior), riding to Moffat, in 1828 or so, saw near some poor cottage (not a farm at all, ‘bare place for a couple of cows,’ perhaps it was a Turnpike-keeper’s Cottage?) not far from Moffat, a forlornly miserable-looking figure walking languidly to and fro, parted from him by the hedge, whom, in spite

of this sunk condition, he recognised clearly for Frank Dixon, who however took no notice of him,—"Perhaps *refuses* to know me," thought Jamie "They have lost their farm, Sister and Husband seem to have taken shelter here, and there is the poor gentleman and scholar Frank, sauntering miserably, with an old plaid over his head, and slipshod<sup>1</sup> in a pair of old *clogs*!" That was Jamie's guess, which he reported to me, and few months after, grim whisper came, low but certain (no inquest or coroner there), that Frank was dead, and had gone in the *Roman* fashion<sup>2</sup> What other could he now do?—The silent, valiant, though vanquished man He was hardly yet thirty-five a man richer in gifts than nine-tenths of the vocal and notable are I remember him with sorrow and affection Native-countryman Frank, and his little Life, what a strange little Island, fifty years off, sunny, homelike, pretty in the memory, yet with tragic thunders waiting it!

Irving's Glasgow news, from the first, were good Approved of, accepted by the great Doctor and his Congregation, preaching heartily, labouring with the 'Visiting Deacons' (Chalmers's grand "*Parochial*" *Anti-Pauperism Apparatus*, much an object of the Doctor's at this time),—seeing and experiencing new things, on all hands of him, in his new wide element He came occasionally to Edinburgh on visit I remember him as of prosperous aspect, a little more

<sup>1</sup> Slipshod means, in its Scotch sense here, not loose or untidy, but stockingless

<sup>2</sup> He died in 1832

carefully, more clerically, dressed than formerly (ample black frock, a little '*sider*,' longer skirted, than the secular sort, hat of gravish breadth of brim, all very simple and correct), he would talk about the Glasgow Radical Weavers, and their notable receptions of him, and utterances to him, while visiting their lanes,—was not copious upon his great Chalmers, though friendly in what he did say. All this, of his first year, must have been in 1820,—late autumn 1819, the date of his instalment.<sup>1</sup> I wish I exactly knew! Year 1819 comes back into my mind as the year of the Radical "rising" in Glasgow, and the kind of (altogether imaginary) "Fight" they attempted on Bonnymuir against the Yeomanry which had assembled from far and wide. A time of great rages and absurd terrors and expectations, a very fierce Radical and Anti-Radical time. Edinburgh endlessly agitated all round me by it (not to mention Glasgow in the distance), gentry people full of zeal and foolish terror and fury, and looking disgustingly busy and important. Courier hussars would come in from the Glasgow region, covered with mud, breathless for head-quarters as you took your walk in Princes Street, and you would hear old powdered gentlemen in silver spectacles talking with low-toned but exultant voice about "cordon of troops, Sir" as you went along. The mass of the people, not the populace alone, had a quite different feeling, as if the danger from those West-country Radicals was small or imaginary and their grievances dreadfully real—which was with emphasis my own poor

<sup>1</sup> See *ibid.* p. 617

private notion of it. One bleared Sunday morning, I had gone out for my walk (perhaps seven to eight A.M.), at the Riding-House in Nicolson Street was a kind of straggly group, or small crowd, with red-coats interspersed—coming up I perceived it was the “Lothian Yeomanry” (*Mid* or *East*, I know not) just getting under way for Glasgow to be part of “the cordon”, I halted a moment—they took the road, very ill ranked, not numerous or very dangerous-looking men of war, but there rose, from the little crowd, by way of farewell cheer to them, the strangest shout I have heard human throats utter, not very loud, or loud even for the small numbers, but it said as plain as words, and with infinitely more emphasis of sincerity, “May the Devil go with *you*, ye peculiarly contemptible, and dead to the distresses of your fellow-creatures!”—Another morning, months after, spring and sun now come, and the “cordon” etc all over,—I met a gentleman, an Advocate, slightly of my acquaintance, hurrying along, musket in hand, towards The Links, there to be drilled as an item of the “Gentlemen Volunteers” now afoot. “You should have the like of this!” said he, cheerily patting his musket. “Hm, yes, but I haven’t yet quite settled on which side!”—which probably he hoped was quiz, though it really expressed my feeling Irving too, and all of us juniors, had the same feeling in different intensities, and spoken of only to one another—a sense that revolt against such a load of untruths, impostures, and quietly inane formalities would one day become indispensable,—sense which had a kind of rash, false, and quasi-insolent joy in it, mutiny, revolt, being a light matter to the young

Irving appeared to take great interest in his Glasgow visitings about among these poor Weavers, and free communings with them as man with men. He was altogether human we heard, and could well believe, he broke at once into sociality and frankness, "would pick a potato from their pot," and in eating it, get at once into free and kindly terms. "Peace be with you here!" was his entering salutation one time, in some weaving shop, which had politely paused and silenced itself on sight of him, "Peace be with you" "Ay, Sir, if there's *plenty* wi't!" said an angry little weaver, who happened to be on the floor, and who began indignant response and remonstrance to the Minister and his fine words "Quite angry and fiery," as Irving described him to us, "a fine thoughtful brow, with the veins on it swollen black, and the eyes under it sparkling and glistening,"—whom, however, he succeeded in pacifying, and parting with on soft terms. This was one of his anecdotes to us, I remember that fiery little weaver and his broad brow and swollen veins, a vanished figure of those days, as if I had myself seen him.

By and by, after repeated invitations, which to me were permissions rather, the time came for my paying a return visit. I well remember the first visit, and pieces of the others, probably there were three or even four in all, each of them a real holiday to me! By steamer to Boness, and then by canal, clipper of canal-boat and two Glasgow scamps of the period, these are figures of the first voyage, very vivid these the rest utterly out. I think I always went by Boness, and steam *so far*, coach

the remainder of the road, in all subsequent journeys Irving lived in Kent Street, eastern end of Glasgow, ground-floor, tolerably spacious room,—I think he sometimes gave me up his bedroom (me the bad sleeper), and went out himself to some friend's house. David Hope (cousin of old Adam's, but much younger, an excellent guileless man and merchant) was warmly intimate and attached, the like William Graham, of Burnswark, Annandale, a still more interesting character, with both of whom I made or renewed acquaintance which turned out to be agreeable and lasting these two were perhaps his most *domestic* and practically trusted friends, but he had already many, in the better Glasgow circles, and, in generous liking and appreciation, tended to *class*, never to defect, with one and all of them "Philosophers" called at Kent Street, whom one did not find so extremely philosophical, though all were amiable and of polite and partly religious turn, and, in fact, these reviews of Glasgow, on its streets, in its jolly (sometimes *Christmas*) dining-rooms and drawing-rooms, were cordial and instructive to me. The solid style of comfort, freedom and plenty, was new to me in that degree. The *Tontine* (my first evening in Glasgow) was quite a treat to my rustic eyes several hundreds of such fine, clean, opulent, and enviable or amiable-looking good Scotch gentlemen, sauntering about in trustful gossip, or solidly reading their newspapers,—I remember the shining bald crowns and serene white heads of several, and the feeling "*O fortunatos nummum*," which they generally gave me. Irving was not with me on this occasion, had probably

left me there for some half-hour, and would come to pick me up again when ready. We made morning calls together too, not very many, and found once, I recollect, an exuberant bevy of young ladies, which I (silently) took as sample of a great and singular privilege in my friend's way of life. Oftenest it was crotchety, speculative, semi-theological elderly gentlemen, whom we met, with curiosity and as yet without weariness on my part, though of course their laughing chatting daughters would have been better. The Glasgow women of the young-lady stamp, seemed to me well-looking, clever enough, good-humoured, but I noticed (for my own behoof, and without prompting of any kind) that they were not so *well dressed* as their Edinburgh Sisters, something flary, glary, colours too flagrant and ill-assorted, want of the harmonious transitions, neatness, and soft Attic art, which I now recognised or remembered for the first time.

Of Dr Chalmers I heard a great deal, naturally the continual topic, or one of them, admiration universal, and as it seemed to me, slightly wearisome, and a good deal indiscriminate and overdone,—which probably (though we were dead-silent on that head) was on occasion Irving's feeling too. But the great man was himself truly lovable, truly loved, and nothing personally could be more modest, intent on his good industries not on himself or his "fame." Twice that I recollect, I specially saw him, once at his own house, to breakfast, company Irving, one Crosby, a young Licentiate, with glaring eyes and speculation in them, who went afterwards to Birmingham, and thirdly myself. It was a cold vile

smoky morning, house and breakfast-room looked their worst in the dismal light. Doctor himself was hospitably kind, but spoke little, and engaged none of us in talk. Oftenest, I could see, he was absent, wandering in distant fields, of abstruse character, to judge by the sorrowful glaze which came over his honest eyes and face. I was not ill-pleased to get away, *ignotus* from one of whom I had gained no new knowledge. The second time was in a rather fine drawing-room (a Mr Parker's), in a rather solemn evening party, where the Doctor, perhaps bored by the secularities and trivialities elsewhere, put his chair beside mine in some clear space of floor, and talked earnestly, for a good while, on some scheme he had for proving Christianity by its visible fitness for human nature "all written in us already," he said, "as in *sympathetic ink*, Bible awakens it, and you can read!" I listened respectfully, not with any real conviction, only with a clear sense of the geniality and goodness of the man. I never saw him again till within a few [weeks] of his death, when he called here, and sat with us an hour, —very agreeable to *Her* and to me, after the long abeyance. She had been with him once on a short Tour in the Highlands, me too he had got an esteem of,—liked the *Cromwell* especially, and Cromwell's self ditto, which I heartily reckoned creditable of him. He did not speak of that, nor of the Free-Kirk War (though I gave him a chance of that, which he soon softly let drop) the now memorablest point to me, was of Painter Wilkie, who had been his familiar in youth, and whom he seemed to me to understand well. "Painter's *language*," he said, "was stunted and



difficult" Wilkie had told him how, in painting his *Rent-Day*, he thought long and to no purpose, by what means he should signify that the sorrowful Woman, with the children there, had left no Husband at home, but was a Widow under tragical *self*-management,—till one morning, pushing along the Strand, he met a small artisan family going evidently on excursion, and in one of their hands or pockets somewhere was visible the *House-key*. "That will do!" thought Wilkie, and prettily introduced the House-key as *coral* in the poor Baby's mouth, just drawn from poor Mammy's pocket, to keep her unconscious little orphan peaceable. He warmly agreed with me in thinking Wilkie a man of real genius, real veracity and simplicity. Chalmers was himself very beautiful to us during that hour, grave, not too grave, earnest, cordial, face and figure very little altered, only the head had grown white, and in the eyes and features you could read something of a serene sadness, as if evening and silent star-crowned night were coming on, and the hot noises of the day growing unexpectedly insignificant to one. We had little thought this would be the last of Chalmers, but in a few weeks after, he suddenly died [May 1847].

He was a man of much natural dignity, ingenuity, honesty, and kind affection, as well as sound intellect and imagination. A very eminent vivacity lay in him, which could rise to complete impetuosity (glowing conviction, passionate eloquence, fiery play of heart and head)—all in a kind of *istic* type, one might say, though wonderfully true and tender. He had a burst of genuine fun too, I have heard, of the same honest, but most plebeian, broadly natural

character his laugh was a hearty low guffaw, and his tones, in preaching, would rise to the piercingly pathetic no preacher ever went so into one's heart. He was a man essentially of little culture, of narrow sphere, all his life, such an intellect, professing to be educated, and yet so ill-*read*, so ignorant in all that lay beyond the horizon in place or in time, I have almost nowhere met with. A man capable of much soaking indolence, lazy brooding, and do-nothingism, as the first stage of his life well indicated, a man thought to be timid, almost to the verge of cowardice yet capable of impetuous activity and blazing audacity, as his latter years showed. I suppose there will never again be such a Preacher in any Christian Church.<sup>1</sup>

Irving's Discourses were far more opulent in ingenious thought than Chalmers's, which indeed were usually the triumphant on-rush of *one* idea with its satellites and supporters, but Irving's wanted in definite *head*, that is, steady invariably evident *aim*, what one might call definite *head* and *backbone*, so that, on arriving, you might see clearly where and how. That was mostly a defect one felt, in traversing those grand forest-avenues of

<sup>1</sup> A slip from a newspaper containing the following extract from Chalmers is here wadded on to the manuscript

"It is a favourite speculation of mine that if spared to sixty, we then enter on the seventh decade of human life, and that this, if possible, should be turned into the Sabbath of our earthly pilgrimage and spent Sabbatically, as if on the shore of an eternal world, or in the outer courts as it were, of the temple that is above—the tabernacle in Heaven. What enamours me all the more of this idea is the retrospect of my mother's widowhood. I long, if God should spare me, for such an old age as she enjoyed, spent as if at the gate of heaven, and with such a fund of inward peace and hope as made her nine years widowhood a perfect peace and foretaste of the blessedness that awaits the righteous."

Carlyle writes on the newspaper slip. Had heard it before from Thomas Luskine, with pathetic comment as to what Chalmers's own "Sabbath decade" had been!

his, with their multifarious outlooks to right and left. He had many thoughts, pregnantly expressed, but they did not tend all one way. The reason was, there were in him infinitely more thoughts than in Chalmers, and he took far less pains in setting them forth. The uniform custom was, he shut himself up all Saturday, became invisible all that day, and had his sermon ready before going to bed. Sermon an hour long or more, it could not be done in one day, except as a kind of *extempore* thing. It flowed along, not as a swift rolling river, but as a broad, deep and bending or meandering one, sometimes it left on you the impression almost of a fine noteworthy *lake*. Noteworthy always, nobody could mistake it for the Discourse of other than an uncommon man. Originality and truth of purpose were undeniable in it, but there was withal, both in the matter and the manner, a something which might be suspected of affectation—a noticeable preference and search for striking quaint and ancient locutions, a style modelled on the Miltonic Old-Puritan, something too in the delivery which seemed elaborate and of forethought, or might be suspected of being so. He always read, but not in the least slavishly, and made abundant rather strong gesticulation in the right places, voice one of the finest and powerfulest,—but not a power quite on the heart, as Chalmers's was, which you felt to be coming direct *from* the heart.

Irving's preaching was accordingly, a thing not above criticism to the Glasgowites, and it got a good deal on friendly terms, as well as "admiration" plenty, in that tempered form,—not often admira-

tion pure and simple, as was now always Chalmers's lot there. Irving no doubt secretly felt the difference, and could have wished it otherwise. But the generous heart of him was incapable of envying any human excellence, and instinctively would either bow to it, and to the rewards of it withal, or rise to loyal emulation of it and them. He seemed to be much liked by many good people, a fine friendly and wholesome element, I thought it for him, and the criticisms going, in connection with the genuine admiration going, might be taken as handsomely *near* the mark.

To me, for his sake, his Glasgow friends were very good, and I liked their ways (as I might easily do) much better than some I had been used to. A romance of novelty lay in them, too, it was the *first* time I had looked into opulent burgher life in any such completeness and composed solidity as here. We went to Paisley, several times, to certain "Carliles" (so they spelt their name, "Annan people" of a century back), rich enough old men of religious moral turn, who received me as "a Cousin,"—their daughters good if not pretty, and one of the sons (Warrand Carlile, who afterwards became a Clergyman) not quite uninteresting to me for some years coming. He married the youngest Sister of Edward Irving, and, I think, is still preaching somewhere in the West Indies, wife long since dead, but one of their Sons still lives, "Gavin Carlile" (or now Carlyle), a Free Kirk Minister here in London (editing his Uncle's Select Works just now)<sup>1</sup>. David Hope, of Glasgow, always a little stuck

<sup>1</sup> *The Collected Writings of Edward Irving*, edited by his nephew, the Rev G. Carlyle, M.A. (5 volumes, imper 8vo, London, 1864-65)

to me afterwards, an innocent cheerful Nathaniel, ever ready to oblige the like much more emphatically did William Graham of Burnswark, whom I first met in the above City under Irving's auspices, and who might, in his way, be called a friend both to Irving and me, so long as his life lasted, which was thirty odd years longer. Other conquests of mine in Glasgow I don't recollect. Graham of Burnswark perhaps deserves a paragraph,—if it could do the good soul any service at all!

Graham was turned of fifty when I first saw him, a lumpish heavy but stirring figure, had got something lamish about one of the knees or ankles, which gave a certain rocking motion to his gait, firm jocund affectionate face, rather reddish with good cheer, eyes big, blue and laughing, nose defaced with snuff, fine bald broad-browed head, ditto almost always with an ugly brown scratch wig. He was free of hand and of heart, laughed with sincerity at not very much of fun,—liked widely, yet with *some* selection, and was widely liked. The history of him was curious. His father, first some small Farmer in "Corrie Water," perhaps, was latterly for many years (I forget whether as Farmer or as Shepherd, but guess the former) stationary at Burnswark, a notable tabular Hill, of no great height, but *detached* a good way on every side, far-seen, almost to the shores of Liverpool,—indeed commanding, all round, the whole of that huge *saucer*, fifty to thirty miles in radius, the bottom point of which is now called Gretna ("Gretan How," Big Hollow, at the head of Solway Firth) a *Burnswark* beautiful to look on and much noted from of old. Has a glorious Roman Camp on

the south flank of it, 'the best preserved in Britain except one' (says General Roy), velvet sward covering the whole, but trenches, *pietorium* (three conic mounds) etc etc, not altered otherwise, one of the finest limpid *wells* within it, and a view to Liverpool (as was said), and into Tynedale, and the Cumberland or even Yorkshire mountains, on the one side, and on the other into the Moffat ditto and the Selkirkshue and Eskdale. The name "*Burnswark*" is properly *Burrowswark* (or *fortification* work) three Roman Stations, with Carlisle ('*Cael-Lewel*, as old as King Solomon') for mother, Netherbie, Middlebie, and Owerbie (or *Upperby* in Eskdale),—the specific Roman *Town* of Middlebie is about half a mile below the Kirk (i.e. eastward of it), and is called by the country people "*The Burrows*" (i.e. *The Scags* or *Haggles*, I should think), a place lying all in dimples and wrinkles, with ruined houses if you dig at all, grassy, but *marable*, part of which is still kept sacred *in lae* by "the Duke" (of Queensberry, now of Buccleuch and Queensberry), while the rest has been all dug to powder in the last sixty or seventy years by the adjoining little Lairds. Many altars, stone figures, tools, axes, etc. were got out of the dug part,—and it used to be one of the tasks of my boyhood to try what I could do at reading the *Inscriptions* found there, which was not much, nor almost ever *wholly* enough, though the country folk were thankful for my little Latin faithfully applied, like the light of a damp windlestraw to them in the darkness which was total! The fable went that from *Burrows* to *Burnswark* (two and a half miles, for Burnswark lies two good miles on the west or opposite side of

the Kirk) there ran a "subterranean passage," complete *tunnel*, equal to *carts* perhaps, but nobody pretended ever to have seen a trace of it, or indeed did believe it. In my boyhood, passing Birrens for the first time, I noticed a small conduit (*cloaca*, I suppose) abruptly ending or issuing in the then recent precipice which had been left by those diggers, and recollect nothing more, except my own poor awe and wonder at the strange scene, strange face-to-face vestige of the vanished *Æons*. The Caledonian Railway now screams and shudders over this dug part of Birrens. William Graham, whom I am (too idly) writing of, was born at the north-east end of Burnswark, and passed, in labour, but in health, frugality and joy, the first twenty-five years of his life.

Graham's Father and Mother seem to have been of the best kind of Scottish Peasant, he had Brothers, two or perhaps three (William was the youngest), who were all respected in their station,—and who all successively emigrated to America, on the following slight first-cause. John Graham, namely, the eldest of the Brothers, had been balloted for the Militia (Dumfriesshire Militia), and, on private consideration with himself, preferred expatriation to soldiering, and quietly took ship to push his fortune in the New World instead. John's adventures there, which probably were rugged enough, are not on record for me, only that, in no great length of time, he found something of success, a solid merchant's-clerkship or the like, with outlooks towards merchant business of his own one day, and invited thither, one by one, all his Brothers to share with him, or

push like him there Philadelphia was the place, at least the ultimate place, and the Firm of "Graham Brothers" gradually rose to be a considerable and well-respected House in that City William, probably some fifteen years junior of John, was the last Brother that went, after him their only Sister, Parents having now died at Burnswark, was sent-for also, and kept house, for William or for another of the bachelor Brothers,—one at least of them had wedded and has left Pennsylvanian Grahams, William continued bachelor for life, and this only Sister returned ultimately to Annandale, and was William's House-manager there I remember her well, one of the amiablest of old maids, kind, true, modestly polite to the very heart,—and in such a curious style of polite culture, Pennsylvanian-Yankee grafted on Annandale-Scotch, used to "expect" instead of "*suppose*," would "guess," too, now and then, and commonly said "Pastor" (which she pronounced "Pawstor") to signify Clergyman or Minister

The Graham Brothers, House growing more and more prosperous and opulent in Philadelphia, resolved at last to have a branch in Glasgow (year, say 1814 or so), and despatched William thither,—whose coming, I dimly remember, was heard of in Annandale by his triumphant purchase for himself, in fee-simple, of the Farm and Hill of Burnswark, which happened to come into the market then His tradings and operations in Glasgow were extensive, not unskilful that I heard of, and were well looked-on, as he himself still more warmly was but at length (perhaps a year or more before my first sight of him), some grand cargo from or to Philadelphia, some



whole fleet of cargoes, all mostly of the same commodity, had, by sudden change of price during the voyage, ruinously misgone, and the fine House of Graham Brothers came to the ground. William was still in the throes of settlement, just about quitting his fine well-appointed mansion in Vincent Street, in a cheerfully stoical humour, and only clinging with invincible tenacity to native Burnswark, which of course was now no longer his, except on Bond with securities,—with interest etc,—all of excessive extent, his friends said, but could not persuade him, so dear to his heart was that native bit of earth, with the fond ‘improvements,’ planting and the like, which he had begun upon it.

Poor Graham kept iron hold of Burnswark, ultimately as plain tenant, good sheep-farm at a fair rent, all attempts otherwise, and they were many and strenuous, having issued in non-success, and the hope of ever recovering himself or it being plainly futile. Graham never merchanted more, was once in America, on exploratory visit, where his Brothers were in some degree set up again, but had no “£8000” to spare for his Burnswark, he still hung a little to Glasgow, tried various things, rather of a projector sort, all of which miscarried, till happily he at length ceased visiting Glasgow, and grew altogether rustie, a successful sheep farmer at any rate, fat, cheery, happy, and so, for his last twenty years, rode visiting about among the little Laids of an intelligent turn, who liked him well, but not with entire acquiescence in all the copious quasi-intelligent talk he had. Irving had a real love for him, with silent deduc-

tions in the unimportant respects, he an entire loyalty and heart-devotedness to Irving. Me also he took up in a very warm manner, and, for the first few years, was really pleasant and of use to me, especially in my then Annandale summers. Through him I made acquaintance with a really intellectual modest circle, or rather pair of people, a Mr and Mrs Johnston, at their place called "Grange," on the edge of the Hill country, seven or eight miles from my Father's. Mrs Johnston was a Glasgow lady, of really fine culture, manners, and intellect, one of the smallest voices, and most delicate, gently-smiling figures, had been in London, etc., her Husband was by birth Laird of this pretty Grange, and had modestly withdrawn to it, finding merchanthood in Glasgow ruinous to weak health. The elegance, the perfect courtesy, the simple purity and beauty I found in both these good people, was an authentic attraction and profit to me in those years, and I still remember them, and that bright little environment of theirs, with a kind of pathetic affection. I as good as lost them on my leaving Annandale, Mr Johnston soon after died, and with Mrs Johnston there could only be at rare intervals a flying call, sometimes only the attempt at such, which amounted to little.

Graham also I practically more and more lost, from that epoch (1826, ever memorable to me otherwise!)<sup>1</sup> He hung about me studiously, and with unabating good-will, on my Annandale visits to my Mother, to whom he was ever attentive and

<sup>1</sup> 1826, the year of Carlyle's marriage

respectful for my sake and her own (dear good Mother, best of Mothers! He pointed out the light of her 'end-window,' *gable*-window, one dark night to me, as I convoyed him from Scotsbrig, "Will there ever be in the world for you a prettier light than that?") He was once or more with us at Craigenputtock, ditto at London, and wrote long *Letters*, not unpleasant to 'read and *burn*' but his sphere was shrinking more and more into dull safety and monotonous rusticity, mine the *reverse*, in respect of 'safety' and otherwise, nay, at length, his faculties were getting hebetated, wrapt in lazy eupeptic fat —the last time I ever, strictly speaking, saw *him* (for he was grown more completely stupid and oblivious every subsequent time), was at the ending of my Mother's Funeral (December 1853), day bitterly cold, heart bitterly sad, at the Gate of Ecclefechan Kirkyard, he was sitting in his Gig, just about to go, I ready to mount for Scotsbrig, and in a day more for London, he gazed on me with his big innocent face, big heavy eyes, as if half-conscious, half-frozen in the cold, and we shook hands nearly in silence

In the Irving-Glasgow time, and for a while afterwards, there went on, at Edinburgh too, a kind of cheery visiting and messaging from these good Graham-Hope people, I do not recollect the visits as peculiarly successful,—none of them except *one*, which was on occasion of George IV's famed "Visit to Edinburgh,"<sup>1</sup> when Graham and Hope (I think, both of them together) occupied my rooms with grateful satisfaction, I myself *not*

<sup>1</sup> Aug. 1 1822

there I had grown disgusted with the fulsome "loyalty" of all classes in Edinburgh towards this approaching "George-Fourth Visit," whom though called and reckoned a "King," I, in my private radicalism of mind, could consider only as a—what shall I call him?—and loyalty was not the feeling I had towards any part of the phenomenon. At length, reading, one day, in a public Placard from the Magistrates (of which there had been several), That on His Majesty's Advent it was expected that everybody would be carefully well-dressed, 'black coat and white duck trousers,' if at all convenient,—I grumbled to myself, "Scandalous flunkeys, I, if I were changing my dress at all, should incline rather to be in white coat and black trousers!"—but resolved rather to quit the City altogether, and be absent and silent in such efflorescence of the flunkeyisms. Which I was, for a week or more (in Annandale and at Kirkchrist with the Churches<sup>1</sup> in Galloway,—ride to Lochinbrack Well, by Kennure Lake, etc., how vivid still!)—and found all comfortably rolled away at my return to Edinburgh.

It was in one of those visits by Irving himself, without any company, that he took me out to Haddington<sup>2</sup> (as recorded elsewhere), to what has since been so momentous through all my subsequent life! We walked and talked,—a good sixteen miles, in the sunny summer afternoon. He took me round

<sup>1</sup> The Churches late of Hitchill (see *supra*, p. 19), who had removed to Galloway.

<sup>2</sup> End of May 1821 (Carlyle's first Letter to Miss Welsh, written on his return to Edinburgh, is dated 4th June of that year).

by Athelstaneford ("Elshinford") Parish, where John Home wrote his "*Douglas*,"—in case of any enthusiasm for Home or it, which I scantily had we leapt the solitary Kirkyard wall, and found close by us the tombstone of "old Skirving," a more remarkable person, Author of the strangely vigorous Doggrel Ballad on "*Preston-Pans Battle*" (and of the ditto *Answer* to a military *Challenge* which ensued thereupon),<sup>1</sup> "one of the most athletic and best-natured of men," said his epitaph. This is nearly all I recollect of the journey the end of it, and what I saw *there*, will be memorable to me while life or thought endures. Ah me, ah me!—I think there had been, before this, on Irving's own part some movements of negotiation over to Kirkcaldy for *release* there, and of hinted hope towards Haddington, which was so infinitely preferable! And something (as I used to gather long afterwards) might have come of it, had not Kirkcaldy been so peremptory, and stood by its bond (as spoken or as written), "Bond or utter Ruin, Sir!"—upon which Irving had honourably submitted and resigned himself. He seemed to be quite composed upon the matter by this time. I remember in our inn at Haddington that first night,

<sup>1</sup> Skirving had in his ballad accused a certain Irish "Lieutenant Smith" of cowardice, and of *running a lay* at the Battle of Prestonpans. Smith, on his return to his quarters at Haddington, was enraged to find himself an object of ridicule, and sent a challenge to Skirving. Skirving, hard at work amongst his servants, paused, leaning on his elbow, considered the challenge, and answered the Military Gentleman who brought it: "I never saw Lieutenant Smith, and I dinna ken whether I can fight him or no, but if he'll come up here, I'll tak' a little o' him, and if I think I can fight him I will. But if not I'll do what I'll nae say."

a little passage we had just seen, in the Minister's house (whom Irving was to *preach* for), a certain shining Miss Augusta,—tall, shapely, airy, giggly, but a consummate fool, whom I have heard called 'Miss *D.*sgusta' by the satirical,—we were now in our double-bedded room, George Inn, Haddington, stripping, or perhaps each already in his bed, when Irving jocosely said to me, "What would you take to marry Miss Augusta, now?" "Not for an entire and perfect chrysolite the size of this terraqueous Globe!" answered I at once, with hearty laughter from Irving—"And what would you take to marry Miss Jeannie, think you?" "Hah, I should not be so hard to deal with there I should imagine!" upon which another bit of laugh from Irving, and we composedly went to sleep. I was supremely dyspeptic and out of health, during those three or four days, but they were the beginning of a new life to me.

The notablest passage in my Glasgow visits was probably of the year before this Edinburgh-Haddington one on Irving's part. I was about quitting Edinburgh for Annandale,<sup>1</sup> and had come round by Glasgow on the road home. I was utterly out of health as usual, but had otherwise had my enjoyments. We had come to Paisley as finale, and were lodging pleasantly with the Carliles. Wairand Carlile hearing I had to go by Muirkirk in Ayrshire, and Irving to return to Glasgow, suggested a convoy of me by Irving and himself, furthered by a fine riding-horse of Wairand's, on the ride-and-tie principle. Irving had cheerfully consented,

<sup>1</sup> This was towards the end of April 1820.

"You and your horse, as far as you can, *I* will go on to Drumclog Moss with Carlyle, then turn home for Glasgow in good time, he on to Muirkirk, which will be about a like distance for him?"

"Done, done!" To me, of course, nothing could be welcomer than this improvised convoy,—upon which we entered accordingly, early A M, a dry brisk April day (far on in April), and one still full of strange dim interest to me. I never rode-and-tied (especially with three!) before or since, but recollect we had no difficulty with it, I never was that way again, and there are pieces in [it] still, strangely vivid to me. Warrand had settled that we should breakfast with a Rev Mr French, perhaps some fifteen miles off, after which he and horse would return. I recollect the Mr French, a fat apoplectic-looking old gentleman, in a room of very low ceiling, but plentifully furnished with breakfast materials, who was very kind to us, and seemed glad and ready to be invaded in this sudden manner by articulate-speaking young men. Good old soul, I never saw him or heard mention of him again.

Drumclog Moss (after several hours, fallen vacant, wholly dim) is the next object that survives, and Irving and I sitting by ourselves, under the silent bright skies, among the "Peat-hags" of Drumclog, with a world all silent round us. These "Peat-hags" are still pictured in me brown bog, all *^* *^* *^* and broken into heathy remnants and bare abrupt wide holes, four or six feet deep, mostly dry at present, a flat wilderness of broken bog, of quagmire not to be trusted (probably *water* in

old days than [now], and wet still at rainy seasons),—clearly a good place for Cameronian Preaching, and dangerously difficult for Claver'sc and horse-soldiery, if "the suffering remnant" had a few old muskets among them! Scott's Novels had given the Claver'sc Skirmish here, which all Scotland knew of already, a double interest in those days I know not that we talked much of this, but we did of many things, perhaps more confidentially than ever before. A colloquy the sum of which is still mournfully beautiful to me, though the details are gone. I remember us sitting on the brow of a Peat-hag, the sun shining, our own voices the one sound, far, far away to westward over our brown horizon, towered up, white and visible at the many miles of distance, a high irregular pyramid,—*"Ailsa Craig!"* we at once guessed, and thought of the seas and oceans over yonder, but we did not long dwell on that. We seem to have seen no human creature after French (though of course our very road would have to be inquired of, etc), to have had no bother, and no need, of human assistance or society,—not even of dinner or refection, French's *breakfast* perfectly sufficing us. The talk had grown ever friendlier, more interesting at length the declining sun said plainly, You must part. We sauntered slowly into the Glasgow-Muirkirk highway (know not *how* we knew to find it without difficulty), masons were building at a wayside Cottage near by, or were packing up on ceasing for the day we leant our backs to a dry stone fence (*"stone-dike,"* dry-stone wall, very common in that country), and looking into



the western radiance, continued in talk yet a while, loth both of us to go. It was here, just as the sun was sinking, [Irving] actually drew from me by degrees, in the softest manner, the confession that I did *not* think as he of Christian Religion, and that it was vain for me to expect I ever could or should. This, if this were so, he had pre-engaged to take *well* of me,—like an elder brother, if I would be frank with him,—and right loyally he did so, and to the end of his life we needed no concealments on that head, which was really a step gained. The sun was about setting, when we turned away, each on his own path. Irving would have a good space *farther* to go than I (as now occurs to me),—perhaps fifteen or seventeen miles,—and would not be in Kent Street till towards midnight. But he feared no amount of walking, enjoyed it rather,—as did I in those young years. I felt sad, but affectionate and good, in my clean, utterly quiet little Inn at Muirkirk, which, and my feelings in it, I still well remember. An innocent little Glasgow Youth (young bagman on his *first* journey, I supposed!) had talked awhile with me in the otherwise solitary little sitting-room. At parting, he shook hands, and with something of sorrow in his tone, said, “Good night, I shall not see *you* again,”—a unique experience of mine in inns.

I was off next morning by four o'clock, Muirkirk, except possibly its pillar of furnace-smoke, all sleeping round me concerning which, I remembered, in the silence, something I had heard from my father in regard to this famed Iron village (famed

long before, but still rural, natural, not all in a roaring whirl, as I imagine it now), this is my Father's picture of an incident he had got to know, and never could forget. On the platform of one of the furnaces, a solitary man ('stoker,' if they call him so) was industriously minding his business, now throwing-in new fuel and ore, now poking the white-hot molten mass that was already in, a poor old maniac woman silently joined him and looked, whom also he was used to, and did not mind, but, after a little, his back being towards the furnace-mouth, he heard a strange thump or cracking puff, and turning suddenly, the poor old maniac woman was not there, and, on advancing to the furnace-edge, he saw the figure of her, red-hot, semi-transparent, floating as ashes on the fearful element for some moments! This had printed itself on my Father's brain, (*twice* perhaps I heard it from him, which was rare), nor will it ever leave my brain either. That day was full of mournful interest to me, in the waste moors, then in bonny Nithsdale (my first sight of it) in the bright but palish almost pathetic sunshine and utter loneliness. About eight P.M., I got well to Dumfries, fifty-four miles, the longest walk I ever made in one day.

Irving's visits to Annandale, one or two every summer, while I spent summer (for cheapness' sake, and health's sake) in solitude at my Father's there, were the sabbath-times of the season to me, by far the beautifullest days, or rather the only beautiful I had! Unwearied kindness, all that tenderest anxious affection could do, was always mine from my incomparable Mother, from my dear brothers,

little clever active sisters, and from every one, brave Father, in his tacit grim way, not at all *excepted*. There was good talk also, with Mother at evening tea, often on Theology (where I did learn at length, by judicious endeavour, to speak piously and *agreeably* to one so pious, *without* unvaracity on my part, nay it was a kind of interesting exercise to wind softly out of those anxious affectionate cavils of her dear heart on such occasions, and *get* real sympathy, real assent, under borrowed forms) Oh her patience with me, Oh her never-tiring love! Blessed be "poverty," which was never indigence in any form, and which has made all that tenfold more dear and sacred to me! With my two eldest brothers also, Alick and John, who were full of ingenuous curiosity, and had (especially John) abundant intellect, there was nice talking as we roamed about the fields in *glowing* time after their work was done,—once I recollect noticing (though probably it happened anxious times,, that little Jean ("Crau," as we called her) she alone of us not being blond but black-haired,—one of the cleverest children I ever saw, then possibly about six or seven, had joined us for private behoof, and was assiduously trotting at my knee, once, eyes and ear eagerly turned up to me! Good little soul I thought it, and think it, very pretty of her. She alone of them had nothing to do but *helping* I suppose (her charge would probably be quilts or patching, all safe to bed now), and was turning her bit of leisure to *this* account instead of another. She was rarely longer than my elbow, but she was head and neck. There was a younger and youngest Sister (Jenny, who is now a

Canada, of far inferior 'speculative intellect' to Jean, but who has proved to have (we used to think) superior *housekeeping* faculties to hers. The same may be said of Mary the next elder to Jean. Both these, especially Jenny, got stupid or stupidish husbands, but have dextrously and loyally made the most of them and of their families and households,—Hanning, of Hamilton, Canada West, Austin, of The Gill, Annan, are now the names of these two. Jean is Mrs Aitken, of Dumfries, still a clever, speculative, ardent, affectionate and discerning woman, but much *scisplitted* by the cares of life, —"*scisplitted*," tragically denied *acumination*, or definite consistency and direction to a point, a "tragedy" often repeated in this poor world, the more is the pity for the world too!

All this was something, but in all this I gave more than I got, and it left a sense of isolation, of sadness, as the rest of my imprisoned life all, with emphasis, did. I kept daily studious, reading diligently (what few books I could get), learning what was possible, German etc., sometimes Dr Brewster turned me to account (on most frugal terms always!) in wretched little translations, compilations, which were very welcome, too, though never other than dreary. Life was all dreary, '*ourry*,' (*Scotticè*), tinted with the hues of imprisonment and impossibility,—hope practically not there, only obstinacy, and a grim steadfastness to strive without hope or with. To all which Irving's advent was the pleasant (temporary) contradiction and *reversal*,—like Sunrising to Night, or impenetrable Fog, and its spectralities! The time of his coming,

the how and when of his movements and possibilities, were always known to me beforehand on the set day, I started forth, better dressed than usual, strode along for Annan, which lay pleasantly in sight all the way (seven miles or more from Mainhill), in the woods of Mount-Annan I would probably meet Irving strolling towards me,—and then, what a talk for the three miles down that bonny river's bank, no sound but our own [voices] amid the lullaby of waters and the twittering of birds! We were sure to have several such walks, whether the first day or not, and I remember none so well as some (chiefly *one*, which is *not* otherwise of moment!) in that fine locality

I generally staid at least one night, on several occasions, two or even more, and remember no visits with as pure and calm a pleasure Annan was then at its culminating point, a fine, bright, self-confident little Town (gone now to dimness, to decay, and almost grass on its streets, by *Railway-transit*), bits of travelling notabilities were sometimes to be found alighted there, Edinburgh people, Liverpool people,—with whom it was interesting (to the recluse party) to 'measure minds' for a little, and be on your best behaviour both as to matter and manner Musical Thomson (memorable, *more* so than venerable, as the Publisher of Burns's Songs) him I saw one evening, sitting in the Reading-room, a clean-brushed commonplace old gentleman in Scratch-wig, whom we spoke a few words to, and took a good look of Two young Liverpool Brothers, Nelson their name, Scholars just out of Oxford, were on visit, one time, in the Irving

circle, specially at "Provost Dickson's," Irving's Brother-in-law's,—these were very interesting to me, night after night, handsome, intelligent, polite, young men, and the first of their species I had seen Dickson's, on other occasions, was usually my lodging, and Irving's along with me, but would not be on this,—had I the least remembrance on that head, except that I seem to have been always beautifully well lodged, and that Mrs Dickson, Irving's eldest Sister, and very like him *minus* the bad eye, and *plus* a fine *dimple* on the bright cheek, was always beneficent and fine to me. Those Nelsons I never saw again, but have heard once, in late years, that they never *did* anything, but continued ornamentally lounging, with Liverpool as headquarters,—which seemed to be something like the prophecy one might have gathered from those young aspects in the Annan visit, had one been intent to scan them—A faded Irish Dandy, once picked up by us, is also present. One fine clean morning, Irving and I found this figure lounging about languidly on the streets, Irving made up to him, invited him home to breakfast, and home he politely and languidly went with us. "bound for some Cattle-fair," he told us (Norwich perhaps), and waiting for some coach. A par-boiled, insipid "*Agricultural* Dandy," or Old Fogie, of Hibernian type, wore a superfine light-green frock, snow-white Corduroys, age above fifty, face colourless, crow-footed, feebly concerted,—proved to have nothing in him, but especially nothing *bad*, and we had been human to him! Breakfast, this morning, I remember, was at "Mrs Fergusson's" (Irving's third Sister, there were four in all, and

there had been three brothers, but were now only two, the youngest and the eldest of the set) Mrs Fergusson's breakfast-tea was praised by the Hibernian pilgrim and well deserved it.

Irving was genially happy in those little Annandale "sunny islets" of his year, happier perhaps than ever elsewhere. All was quietly flourishing in this, his natal element, Father's house neat and contented, ditto ditto or (perhaps blooming out a little farther), those of his Daughters, all nestled close to it in place withal a very prettily thriving group of things and objects, in their limits, in their safe seclusion and Irving was, silently, but visibly in the hearts of all, the flower and crowning jewel of it. He was quiet, cheerful, genial, soul unruffled, clear as a mirror, honestly loving and loved, all round. His time, too, was so *short*, every moment valuable, —alas, and in so few years after, Ruin's ploughshare had run through it all, and it was prophesying to you, "Behold, in a little while, the last trace of me will not be here, and I shall have vanished tragically, and fled into oblivion and darkness, like a bright dream!" As is, long since, mournfully the fact,—when one passes, pilgrim-like, those old Houses still standing there, which I have once or twice done.

Our dialogues did not turn very much or long on personal topics, but wandered wide over the world and its ways,—new men of the travelling conspicuous sort, whom he had seen in Glasgow, new books sometimes, my scope being shut in that respect, all manner of interesting objects and discoursings but, to me, the personal, when they did come in course, as they were sure to do now and then, in fit

proportion, were naturally the gratefulest of all Irving's voice to me was one of blessedness and new hope. He would not hear of my gloomy prognostications, all nonsense that I never should get out of these obstructions and "impossibilities," the real impossibility was that such a talent etc should *not* cut itself clear, one day. He was very generous to everybody's "talent," especially to mine,—which to myself was balefully dubious (nothing but bare scaffold-poles, weatherbeaten corner-pieces, of perhaps a "*potential* talent," ever visible to me) —his predictions about what I *was* to be flew into the completely incredible, and however welcome, I could only rank them as devout imaginations and quiz them away. "You will see now," he would say, "one day we two will shake hands across the brook, you as first in Literature, I as first in Divinity, —and people will say, "Both these fellows are from Annandale where is Annandale?" This I have heard him say, more than once, always in a laughing way, and with self-mockery enough to save it from being barrenly vain. He was very sanguine, I much the reverse,—and had his consciousness of powers, and his generous ambitions and fore-castings, never ungenerous, never ignoble. Only an enemy could have called him "vain," but perhaps an enemy could, or at least would, and occasionally did. His pleasure in being *loved* by others was very great, and this, if you looked well, was manifest in him when the case offered. never more, or *more* than this, in any case, and this too he had well in check at all times. if this was vanity, then he might by some be called a little vain. if not



not. To trample on the smallest mortal or be tyrannous even towards the basest of caitiffs, was never at any moment Irving's turn, no man that I have known had a sunnier type of character, or *so* little of hatred towards any man or thing. On the whole, *less* of rage in him than I ever saw combined with such a fund of courage and conviction. Noble Irving, he was the faithful elder brother of my life in those years, generous, wise, beneficent, all his dealings and discourses with me were. Well may I recollect, as blessed things in my existence, those Annan and other visits, and feel that, beyond all other men, he was helpful to me when I most needed help.

Irving's position at Glasgow, I could dimly perceive, was not without its embarrassments, its discouragements, and evidently enough it was nothing like the ultimatum he was aiming at,—in the road to which, I suppose, he saw the obstructions rather multiplying than decreasing or diminishing. Theological Scotland, above all things, is dubious and jealous of *originality*, and Irving's tendency to take roads of his own was becoming daily more indisputable. He must have been severely *tried in the Sierra*, had he continued in Scotland! Whether that might not have brought him out clearer, more pure and victorious in the end, must remain for ever a question. Much suffering and contradiction it would have cost him, mean enough for most part, and *possibly* with loss of patience, with *mutiny* etc etc., for ultimate result. But one may now regret that the experiment was never to be made.

Of course, the invitation to London was infinitely welcome to him, summing up, as it were, all of good that had been in Glasgow (for it was the rumours and reports from Glasgow people that had awakened Hatton Garden to his worth), and promising to shoot him aloft over all that had been obstructive there, into wider new elements. The negotiations and correspondings had all passed at a distance from me but I recollect well our final practical parting, on that occasion. A dim November or December night,<sup>1</sup> between nine and ten, in the Coffee-room of the Black Bull Hotel. He was to start by early coach to-morrow. Glad I was bound to be, and in a sense was, but very sad I could not help being. He himself looked hopeful, but was agitated with anxieties too, doubtless with regrets as well,—more clouded with agitation than I had ever seen the fine habitual solar-light of him before. I was the last friend he had to take farewell of. He showed me old Sir Harry Moncreiff's Testimonial, a Reverend old Presbyterian Scotch Baronet, of venerable quality (the last of his kind) whom I knew well by sight, and by his universal character for integrity, honest orthodoxy, shrewdness and veracity, Sir Harry testified with brevity, in stiff firm, ancient hand, several important things on Irving's behalf, and ended by saying, "All this is my true opinion, and meant to be understood as it is written." At which we had our bit of approving laugh, and thanks to Sir Harry. Irving did not laugh that night, laughter was not the mood of either of us. I gave him as road-companion a

<sup>1</sup> It was in December, just before Christmas 1821

bundle of the best cigars (gift of Graham to me) I almost ever had—he had no practice of smoking, but could a little, by a time, and agreed that on the Coach-roof, where he was to ride night and day, a cigar now and then might be tried with advantage. Months afterwards, I learnt he had begun by losing every cigar of them,—left the whole bundle lying on our seat in the Stall of the Coffee-room,—this cigar-gift being probably our last transaction there. We said farewell—and I had in some sense, according to my worst anticipation, *lost* my friend's society (not my friend himself ever), from that time.

For a long while I saw nothing of Irving, after this, heard in the way of public rumour, or more specific report chiefly from Graham and Hope of Glasgow, how grandly acceptable he had been at Hatton Garden, and what negotiating, deliberating and contriving had ensued in respect of the impediments there ('Preacher ignorant of *Gaelic*? On fundamental law requires him to preach *half the Sabbath* in that language!" etc etc),—and how, at length, all these were got over, or tumbled aside, and the matter settled into adjustment 'Irving our Preacher *talks Gaelic*,' to the huge contentment of his Congregation and all onlookers. Of which latter there were already in London a select class—the chief religious people getting to be aware, that an altogether uncommon man had arrived here to speak to them. On all these points, and generally on all his experiences in London glad enough should I have been to hear from him abundantly, but he wrote nothing on such points, nor in fact had I expected anything; and the truth was which and a

little disappoint me in time, our regular correspondence had here suddenly come to *finis*! I was not angry how could I be? I made no solicitation or remonstrance, nor was any poor *pique* kindled (I think) except strictly, and this in silence, so far as was proper for self-defence but I was always sorry more or less, and regretted it as a great loss I had, by ill-luck, undergone Taken from me by ill-luck, —but then also hadn't it been given me by good ditto? Peace, and be silent! In the first months, Irving, I doubt not, had intended much correspondence with me, were the hurlyburly once done, but no sooner was it so in some measure, than his flaming popularity had begun, spreading, mounting without limit, and instead of business hurlyburly there was whirlwind of conflagration!

Noble good soul, in his last weeks of life, looking back from that grim shore upon the safe sunny isles and smiling possibilities now forever far behind, he said to Henry Drummond, "I should have kept Thomas Carlyle closer to me his counsel, blame or praise, was always faithful, and few have such eyes!" These words (the first part of them *ipsissima verba*) I know to have been verily his must not the most blazing indignation (had the least vestige of such ever been in me, for one moment) have died almost into tears at sound of them? Perfect absolution there had long been, without inquiry after penitence My ever-generous, loving, and noble Irving!

If in a gloomy moment I had ever fancied that my friend was lost to me, because no Letters came from him, I had shining proof to the contrary very soon

It was in these first months of Hatton Garden and its imbroglio of affairs, that he did a most signal benefit to me, got me appointed Tutor and intellectual guide and guardian to the young Charles Buller, and his Boy Brother, now Sir Arthur and an elderly Ex-Indian of mark. The case had its comic points, too, seriously important as it was, to me for one! Its pleasant real history is briefly this. Irving's preaching had attracted Mrs Strachey, Wife of a well-known Indian Official (of Somersetshire kindred), then an "Examiner" in the India House, and a man of real worth, far diverse as his worth and ways were from those of his beautiful, enthusiastic, and still youngish Wife — a bright creature, she, given wholly (though there lay silent in her a great deal of fine childlike *wirth* withal, and of innocent *secular* grace and gift) to things sacred and serious, emphatically what the Germans call a *Schone Seele*. She had brought Irving into her circle, found him good and glorious there almost more than in the pulpit itself, had been speaking of him to her elder Sister, Mrs Buller (a Calcutta fine-lady, and bright princess of the land worshipped there, a once very beautiful, still very witty graceful airy and ingenuously intelligent woman, of the *gossamer* kind), and had naturally ended up with, "Come and dine with us, come and see this uncommon man!" Mrs Buller came so (I dare say in much suppressed quizzery and wonder, the uncommon man, took to him, she, and her son, — recognised, as did her Husband too, the robust practical common-sense that as in later years, after a full time ago began speaking of a domestic harmony there was with a cheer, but too

mercurial unmanageable eldest lad of hers, whom they knew not what to do with Irving took sight and survey of this dangerous eldest lad, Charles Buller junior, namely, age then about fifteen, honourably done with Harrow some weeks or months ago, still too young for College on his own footing, and very difficult to dispose of Irving perceived that though perfectly accomplished in what Harrow could give him, this hungry and highly ingenious youth had fed hitherto on Latin-and-Greek *husks*, totally unsatisfying to his huge appetite that being a young fellow of the keenest sense for everything from the sublime to the ridiculous, and full of airy ingenuity and fun, he was in the habit, in quiet evenings at home, of starting *theses* with his Mother in favour of Pierce Egan and *Boxiana* (as if the annals of English *boxing* were more nutritive to an existing Englishman than those of the *Peloponnesian War*, etc etc), against all which, as his Mother vehemently argued, Charles would stand on the defensive, with such swiftness and ingenuity of fence, that frequently the matter kindled between them, and, both being of hot though most placable temper, one or both grew loud, and the old gentleman Charles Buller senior, who was very deaf, striking blindly in at this point, would embroil the whole matter into a very bad condition! Irving's recipe, after some consideration, was "Send this gifted unguided Youth to Edinburgh College, I know a young man there who could lead him into richer spiritual pastures, and take effective charge of him" Buller thereupon was sent, and his Brother Arthur with him, boarded with a good old Dr Fleming (in

George's Square), then a Clergyman of mark, and I (on a salary of £200 a-year) duly took charge. This was a most important thing to me, in the economics and practical departments of my life,—and I owe it wholly to Irving. On this point, I always should remember, he did "write" copiously enough, to Dr Fleming and other parties,—and stood up in a gallant and grandiloquent way for every claim and right of his "young Literary Friend," who had nothing to do but wait silent, while everything was being adjusted completely to his wish, or beyond it.

From the first, I found my Charles a most manageable, intelligent, cheery and altogether welcome and agreeable phenomenon, quite a bit of sunshine in my dreary Edinburgh element. I was in waiting for his Brother and him when they landed at Fleming's. We set instantly out on a "walk, round by the foot of Salisbury Crags, up from Holyrood, by the Castle and La-Courts, home again to George's Square, and really I recollect few more pleasant walks in my life." So all-intelligent, seizing everything you said to him with such a recognition, so loyal-hearted cheerful, guileless, so delighted (evidently,) with me, as I was with him. Arthur, a two years younger, kept mainly silent, being slightly deaf too, but I could perceive that he also—as a free-lance fellow, honest, intelligent, and kind, and that apparently I had been altogether much in luck in this domestic adventure. Which proved abundantly true. For the two Youths both took to me with extraordinary liking, and I to them, and we were in the end, of quarters or even of careers

and dreariness, between us such "teaching" as I never did, in any sphere before or since! Charles, by his qualities, his ingenuous curiosities, his brilliancy of faculty and character, was actually an entertainment to me, rather than a labour, if we walked together (which I remember sometimes happening), he was the best company I could find in Edinburgh. I had entered him of Dunbar's Third Greek Class in College. In Greek and Latin, in the former in every respect, he was far my superior, and I had to *prepare* my lessons by way of keeping *him* to his work at Dunbar's. Keeping him "to work" was my one difficulty, if there was one, and my essential function. I tried to guide him into reading, into solid inquiry and reflection, he got some mathematics from me, and might have had more. He got, in brief, what expansion into wider fields of intellect, and more manful modes of thinking and working my poor possibilities could yield him, and was always generously grateful to me afterwards, friends of mine, in a fine frank way, beyond what I could be thought to merit, he, Arthur, and all the Family, till death parted us.

This of the Bullets was the product for me of Irving's first months in London, began, and got under way, in the Spring and Summer of 1822, which followed our winter parting in the Black Bull Inn. I was already getting my head a little up, translating *Legendre's Geometry* for Brewster, my outlooks somewhat cheerfuller,—I still remember a happy forenoon (Sunday, I fear!) in which I did a *Fifth Book* (or complete "Doctrine of Proportion") for that work, complete really, and lucid, and yet one of the *briefest* ever known, it was begun and



done that forenoon, and I have (except correcting the press next week) never seen it since, but still feel as if it were right enough and felicitous in its kind ! I got only £50 for my entire trouble in that *Legendre*, and had already ceased to be in the least proud of *Mathematical* prowess, but it was an honest job of work honestly done, though perhaps for bread-and-water wages,—and that was such an improvement upon wages producing (in Jean Paul's phrase) only water without the bread !— Towards Autumn the Buller Family followed to Edinburgh, Mr and Mrs Buller with a third very small son, Reginald, who was a curious gesticulating, pen-drawing, etc little creature, *not* to be under my charge, but who generally *dined* with me at luncheon time, and who afterwards turned out a lazy, hebetated fellow, and is now Parson of Troston, a fat living in Suffolk these English or Anglo-Indian gentlefolks were all a new species to me, sufficiently exotic in aspect, but we recognised each other's quality more and more, and did very well together. They had a house in India Street, saw a great deal of Company (of the Ex-Indian, accidental English-gentleman, and native or touring *Lion* genus, for which Mrs Buller had a lively appetite), I still lodged in my old half-rural rooms, "Moray Place, Pilrig Street," attended my two Pupils during the day hours (*lunching* with "Regie" by way of dinner), and rather seldom, yet to my own taste amply often enough, was of the state "dinner," but walked home to my Books, and to my Brother John, who was now lodging with me and attending College—Except for *Dyspepsia*, I could have been extremely content, but that did dismally

forbid me, now and afterwards! Irving and other friends always treated the "ill-health" item as a light matter, which would soon vanish from the account, but I had a presentiment that it would stay there, and be the Old Man of the Sea to me through life,—as it has too tragically done, and will do to the end Woe on it, and not for my own sake alone,—and yet perhaps a benefit withal has been in it, priceless though hideously painful!—

Of Irving in these two years I recollect almost nothing personal, though all round I heard a great deal of him and he must have been in my company at least once,—prior to the advent of the elder Bullers, and been giving me counsel and light on the matter, for I recollect his telling me of *Mrs* Buller (having, no doubt, portrayed *Mr* Buller to me in acceptable and clearly intelligible lineaments) That she, she too was a worthy, honourable and quick-sighted lady, but not without fine-ladyisms, crotchets, caprices,—“somewhat like Mrs Welsh, you can fancy, but good too, like her” Ah me, this I perfectly remember, this and nothing more of those Irving interviews and intercourses, and it is a memento to me of a most important province in my poor world at that time! I was in constant correspondence (weekly or oftener, sending *Books* etc etc) with *Had-dington*, and heard often about Irving, and of things far *more* interesting to me, from that quarter Gone silent now, closed for ever, so sad, so strange it all is now!—Irving, I think, had paid a visit there, and certainly sent letters,—by the above token, I too must have seen him at least once All this was in his first London Year, or Half-year, some months

before his "popularity" had yet taken fire, and made him for a time the property of all the world rather than of his friends

The news of this latter event, which came in vague, fast, fitful, and decidedly *fuliginous* forms, was not quite welcome to any of us.—perhaps, in secret, not welcome at all. People have their envies, their pitiful self-comparisons, and feel obliged sometimes to profess, from the teeth outwards, more "joy" than they really have not an agreeable duty, or quasi-duty, laid on one! For myself I can say that there was first, something of real joy "success to the worth of success", second something (probably, not yet much, of honest question for *his* sake, "Can *he* guide it in that huge element, as eg Chalmers has done in this smaller one?" and third, a not ceasing quantity of "*Quid tui interest?*" What business hast thou with it, poor, suffering, hard-cuffed wretch? To me, these great comings in Hatton Garden came on, on the wings of Rumour, the exact nature of them uncertain. To me, for many months back, I long had fallen totally silent, and this seemed a seal to its being a permanent silence. I had been growing steadily more in heart too, and was only, in my usual reticence ready to say, "Well, no one is happy, and gaining nothing, though and anxious to be, or, miserable, and to gain more at all!" These are so far as I can now read, honest — feelings on the matter. As to my opinion that I see at a glance these temporary, transient, and so forth, better or ill advised, but he seems to be the great force of the world, that has taken me from me, and I cannot, as, to myself,

"Well, well, then, so it must be"—One heard too, often enough, that in Irving there was visible a certain joyancy and frankness of triumph, that he took things on the high key, nothing doubting, and foolish stories circulated about his lofty sayings, sublimities of manner and the like, something of which I could believe (and yet kindly interpret too) all which might have been, though it scarcely was, some consolation for our present silence towards one another,—for what could I have *said*, in the circumstances, that would have been, on both sides, agreeable and profitable?—

It was not till late in Autumn 1823, nearly two years after our parting in the Black Bull Inn, that I fairly, and to a still memorable measure, saw Irving again. He was on his Marriage Jaunt, Miss Martin of Kirkcaldy now become his Life-Partner, off on a Tour to the Highlands, and the generous soul had determined to pass near Kinnaird (right bank of Tay, a mile below the junction of Tummel and Tay), where I then was with the Bullers, and pick me up to accompany as far as I would. I forget where or how our meeting was (at Dunkeld probably), I seem to have lodged with them two nights in successive Inns, and certainly parted from them at Loch Tay Village, Sunday afternoon, where my horse, by some means, must have been waiting for me. I remember baiting him (excellent cob or pony "Dolph," i.e. *Bardolph*, bought for me at Lilliesleaf Fair by my dear Brother Alick, and which I had ridden into the Highlands for health) at Aberfeldy, and to have sat, in a kindly and polite yet very huggermugger cottage, among good peasant

Kirk-people, refreshing themselves on returning home from Sermon, sat for perhaps some two hours, till poor Dolph got rested and refected like his fellow-creatures there. I even remember something like a fraction of scrag of mutton and potatoes eaten by myself,—in strange contrast, had I thought of that, to Irving's nearly simultaneous dinner, which would be with My Lord, at Taymouth Castle! After Aberfeldy Cottage, the curtain falls.

Irving, on this his Wedding-Jaunt, seemed superlatively happy, as was natural to the occasion, or more than natural, as if at the top of Fortune's wheel, and in a sense (a generous sense, it must be owned, and not a *tyrannous* in any measure), striking the stars with his sublime head. Mrs Irving was demure and quiet, though doubtless not *less* happy at heart, really comely in her behaviour. Irving had loyally taken her as the consummate flower of all his victory in the world,—poor good *tragic* woman, better probably than the fortune she had, after all!—

My friend was kind to me as possible, and bore with my gloomy humours (for I was ill and miserable to a degree), nay perhaps as foil to the radiancy of his own sunshine he almost enjoyed them. I remember jovial bursts of laughter from him at my surly sarcastic and dyspeptic utterances. "Doesn't this subdue you, Carlyle?" said he somewhat solemnly we were all three standing at the Falls of Aberfeldy (amid "the *Bells*" of ditto, and memories of song), silent in the October dusk, perhaps with moon rising,—our ten miles to Taymouth still ahead,— "Doesn't this subdue you?" "Subdue me? I

should hope not! I have quite other things to front with defiance, in this world, than a gush of bog-water tumbling over crags as here!" Which produced a joyous and really kind laugh from him as sole answer. He had much to tell me of London, of its fine literary possibilities for a man, of its literary stars, whom he had seen, or knew of Coleridge in particular who was in the former category, a marvellous sage and man, Hazlitt, who was in the latter, a fine talent too, but tending towards scamphood. "Was at the *Fonthill-Abbey Sale*, the other week, hired to attend as a '*White-bonnet*' there," said he with a laugh. *White-bonnet* intensely vernacular, is the Annandale name for a false bidder merely appointed to raise prices, works so, for his five shillings, at some poor little Annandale Roup (*Ruf*, or vocal Sale) of Standing crop or hypothecated cottage furniture, and the contrast and yet kinship between these little things and the Fonthill great ones, was ludicrous enough. He would not hear of ill-health being any hindrance to me, he had himself no experience in that sad province. All seemed possible to him, all was joyful and running upon wheels. He had suffered much angry criticism in his late triumphs (on his "*Oration*s" quite lately), but seemed to accept it all with jocund mockery, as something harmless and beneath him.

Wilson in *Blackwood* had been very scornful, and done his bitterly enough disobliging best nevertheless Irving, now advising with me, about some detail of our motions or of my own, and finding I still demurred to it, said with true radiancy of look,

"Come now, you know I am the *judicious Hooker*!" which was considered one of Wilson's cruellest hits, in that Blackwood *Article*. To myself I remember his answering,—in return evidently for some criticism of my own, on the *Orations*,<sup>1</sup> which was not so laudatory as required, but of which I recollect nothing further—"Well, Carlyle, I am glad to hear you say all that, it gives me the opinion of another mind on the thing,"—which at least, beyond any doubt, it did! He was in high sunny humour, good Irving. There was no trace of anger left in him, he was jovial, riant, jocose,—jocose rather than serious throughout, which was a new phasis to me. And furthermore, in the serious vein itself there was oftenest something of *falsetto* noticeable (as in that of the waterfall "subduing" one),—generally speaking, a new height of self-consciousness not yet sure of the manner and carriage that was suitablest for it. He affected to feel his popularity too great, and burdensome, spoke much about a Mrs Basil Montagu, elderly, sage, lofty, yet humane, whom we got to know afterwards, and to call by his name for her, "the Noble Lady," who had saved him greatly from the dashing floods of that tumultuous and unstable element, hidden him away from it once and again, done kind ministrations, spread sofas for him, and taught him "to rest." The last thing I recollect of him was, on our coming out

<sup>1</sup> *The Orations of George Thompson* For Judgment to Come, or Arraigned in Nine Parts (1 vol London, 1823) Miss Welsh's copy is inscribed "To Jane Welsh my beloved Pupil and most dear friend—written to her Father whom I love no less—to who smiles upon his labour the author is indebted for much very much of his present state."

from Taymouth Kirk (Kirk, Congregation, Minister and Sermon utterly erased from me), how in coming down the broadish little street, he pulled off his big broad hat, and walked, looking mostly to the sky, with his fleece of copious coal-black hair flowing in the wind, and in some spittings of rain that were beginning, how thereupon, in a minute or two, a Livery Servant ran up, "Please, Sir, aren't you the Rev Edward Irving?" "Yes" "Then my Lord Breadalbane begs you to stop for him one moment" Whereupon *cut Flunkie*, Irving turning to us, with what look of sorrow he could, and "Again found out!" upon which the old Lord came up (Father of the last, or late "Free-Kirk" one, whom I have sometimes seen), and civilly invited him to dinner Him and Party, I suppose, but to me there was no temptation, or on those terms less than none so I had Bardolph saddled, and rode for Aberfeldy, as above said Home, sunk in manifold murky reflections, now lost to me,—and of which only the fewest (and friendliest) were comfortably fit for uttering to the Bullers next day I saw no more of Irving for this time. But he had been at Haddington too, was perhaps again corresponding a little there, and I heard occasionally of him, in the beautiful, bright, and kindly quizzing style that was natural there

I was myself writing *Schiller* in those months, a task Irving had encouraged me in, and prepared the way for in the *Lordor Magazine*,—three successive Parts there were, I know not how far advanced at this period, know only that I was nightly working at the thing in a serious, sad, and totally



solitary way My two rooms were in the *Old* "Mansion" of Kinnaird, some three or four hundred yards from the New, and on a lower level, overshadowed with wood, thither I always retired directly after tea, and for most part had the edifice all to myself, good candles, good wood fire, place dry enough, tolerably clean, and such *silence* and total absence of company good or bad, as I never experienced before or since I remember still the grand *sough* of those woods, or perhaps in the stillest times, the distant ripple of Tay, nothing else to converse with but this and my own thoughts, which never for a moment pretended to be joyful, and were sometimes pathetically sad I was in the miserablest dyspeptic health, uncertain whether I ought not even to *quit* on that account, and at times almost resolving to do it, dumb, far away from all my Loved ones,—my poor *Schiller*, nothing considerable of a *work* even to my own judgment, had to be steadily persisted in, as the only protection and resource in this inarticulate huge *wilderness*, actual and symbolical My Editor I think was complimentary, but I knew better The *Times* Newspaper once brought me, without commentary at all, an "eloquent" passage reprinted (about the *Tragedy* of "noble Literary Life"), which I remember to have read with more pleasure, in this utter isolation, and as the *first* public nod of approval I had ever had, than any criticism or laudation that has ever come to me since For about two hours it had lighted in the desolations of my inner man a strange little glow of illumination but here too, on a little reflection, I 'knew better,' and the winter

afternoon was not over when I saw clearly how very small this conquest was, and things were in their *statu quo* again

*Schiller* done, I began *Wilhelm Meister*, a task I liked perhaps rather better, too scanty as my knowledge of the element, and even of the language still was. Two years before, I had at length, after some repulsions, got into the heart of *Wilhelm Meister*, and eagerly read it through,—my sally out, after finishing, along the vacant streets of Edinburgh (a windless, Scotch-misty Sunday night) is still vivid to me. “Grand, surely, harmoniously built together, far-seeing, wise and true when, for many years, or almost in my life before, have I read such a Book?” Which I was now, really in part as a kind of duty, conscientiously translating for my countrymen, if they would read it,—as a select few of them have ever since kept doing. I finished it the next Spring, not at Kinnaird, but at Mainhill (a month or two there, with my best of nurses and of hostesses, my Mother, blessed voiceless or low-voiced time, still sweet to me!), with *London* now silently ahead and the Bulls there, or to *be* there of Kinnaird life they had now had enough, and I (and my miserable health) far more than enough some time before! But that is not my subject here. I had ridden to Edinburgh, there to consult a Doctor, having at last reduced my complexities to a single question, “Is this disease curable by medicine, or is it chronic, incurable except by regimen, if even so?” This question I earnestly put, got response, “It is all *tobacco*, Sir, give up tobacco,” gave it instantly and strictly up,—found, after long months, that I might as well have ridden

sixty miles in the opposite direction, and "poured my sorrows into the long hairy ear of the first jockey I came upon," as into this select medical man's whose name I will not mention.

After these still months at Mainhull, my printing at Edinburgh was all finished, and I wrote it thicker with my *Poems* in my pocket; finished that and the rest of the *Master* business (£180 of profit, the choicest part of it) rapidly off, made a visit to Haddington—what a retrospect to me now, encircled by the Silences and the Fierceties, most beautiful, most sad (I remember the green shawl she wore, and her anxious silent thoughts, and my own, mutually legible both of them, in part,—my own little *Dalrymple* now at rest and far away!)—which was the last thing in Scotland. Of the Leith Smack, every time and event in which is curiously present, though so unimportant, I will say nothing, only that we entered London River on a beautiful May<sup>1</sup> morning, scene very impressive to me and still very vivid in me, and that soon after mid-day I landed safe in living, as appointed.

Ivimey lived in Middleton Terrace (7, Middleton St. 2, 3) Ishington No. 4—it was a new place, houses bright and smart but inwardly bad as usual. Only one side of the new Square was built, the western side which has its back towards Battle Bridge river. Ivimey's house was fourth from the northern end of that which of course had its back on the New Road. The place was airy, not uncheerful, on direct prospect but the front was

<sup>1</sup> I was in London there.

good space of green ground, and in it, on the hither edge of it, the big open *reservoir* of Myddelton's "New River" (now above two centuries *old*, for that matter, but recently made new again and all cased in tight masonry), on the spacious expanses of smooth flags surrounding which, it was pleasant on fine mornings to take our early promenade, with the free sky overhead, and the New Road with its lively traffic and vehiculation seven or eight good yards below our level. I remember several pretty strolls here, ourselves two, while breakfast was getting ready close by, and the esplanade, a high little island lifted free out of the noises and jostlings, was all our own.

Irving had received me with the old true friendliness, wife and household eager to imitate him therein. I seem to have staid a good two or three weeks with them at that time (Buller arrangements not yet ready, nay sometimes threatening to become uncertain altogether!)—and, off and on, during the next ten months, I saw a great deal of my old Friend and his new affairs and posture. That first afternoon, with its curious phenomena, is still very lively in me. Basil Montagu's eldest son ("Noble Lady's" *stepson*, she was Basil's *third* Wife, and had four kinds of children at home, a most sad miscellany, as I afterwards found), 'Mr Montagu junior,' accidental guest at our neat little early dinner, my first specimen of the London Dandy,—*broken* Dandy, very mild of manner, who went all to shivers, and died miserable, soon after this was novelty first. Then, during or before his stay with us, dash of a brave carriage driving up, and entry of a strangely-complexioned young lady, with soft brown eyes and

floods of *bronzc*-red hair, really a pretty-looking, smiling and amiable, though most foreign bit of magnificence and kindly splendour, whom they welcomed by the name of "dear Kitty,"—Kitty Kirkpatrick, Charles Buller's cousin or half-cousin, Mrs Strachey's full cousin, with whom she lived, her birth, as I afterwards found, an Indian *Romance*, mother a sublime *Begum*, father a ditto English Official, mutually adoring, wedding, living withdrawn in their own private paradise, *Romance* famous in the East. A very singular "dear Kitty," who seemed bashful withal, and soon went away,—twitching off, in the lobby (as I could notice, not without wonder), the loose label which was sticking to my trunk or bag, still there as she tripped past, and carrying it off in her pretty hand with what imaginable object then, in Heaven's name? To show it to Mrs Strachey I afterwards guessed, to whom, privately, poor I had been prophesied of, in the usual grandiloquent terms. This might be called novelty second, if not first and far greatest! Then after dinner, in the drawing-room, which was prettily furnished, the *Romance* of said furnishing,—which had all been done, as if by beneficent fairies, in some temporary absence of the owners, "We had decided on not furnishing it," Irving told me, "not till we had more money ready, and, on our return, this was how we found it. The people here are of a nobleness you have never before seen!"—"And don't you yet guess at all who can have done it?" "H'm, perhaps we guess vaguely, but it is their Secret, and we should not break it against their will." It turned out to have been Mrs Strachey and dear Kitty, both

of whom were rich and openhanded, that had done this fine stroke of art-magic, one of the many munificences achieved by them in this new province. Perhaps the "Noble Lady" had, at first, been suspected, but how innocently she,—not flush in that way at all, though notably so in others! The talk about these and other noble souls, and new phenomena, strange to me, and half-incredible in such interpretation, left me wondering and confusedly guessing over the much that I had heard and seen, this day.

Irving's London element and mode of existence had its questionable aspects, from the first, and one could easily perceive, here as elsewhere, that the ideal of fancy and the actual of fact, were two very different things. It was as the former that my Friend, according to old habit, strove to represent it to himself, and to *make it be*, and it was as the latter that it obstinately continued being! There were beautiful items in his present scene of life, but a great majority which, under specious figure, were intrinsically poor, vulgar and importunate, and introduced largely into one's existence the character of *huggermugger*, not of greatness or success in any real sense. He was, inwardly, I could observe, nothing like so happy as in old days, inwardly confused, anxious, dissatisfied, though, as it were, denying it to himself, and striving, if not to "talk big," which he hardly ever did, to *think* big upon all this. We had many strolls together, no doubt much dialogue, but it has nearly all-gone from me,—probably not so worthy of remembrance as our old communings were. Crowds of visitors came about him, and ten

times or a hundred times as many would have come if allowed, well-dressed, decorous people, but for most part, tiresome, ignorant, weak, or even silly and absurd. He persuaded himself that at least he "loved their love,"—and of this latter, in the kind they had to offer him, there did seem to be no lack. He and I were walking, one bright Summer evening, somewhere in the outskirts of Islington, in what was or had once been *fields*, and was again coarsely green in general, but with symptoms of past devastation by bricklayers (who have now doubtless covered it all with their dirty "human dog-hutches of the period!")—when in some smoothish hollower spot, there suddenly disclosed itself a considerable company of altogether fine-looking young girls, who had set themselves to dance, all in airy bonnets, silks and flounces, merrily alert, nimble as young fawns, tripping it, to their own rhythm, on the light fantastic toe with the bright beams of the setting sun gilding them, and the hum and smoke of huge London shoved aside as foil or background, nothing could be prettier. At sight of us they suddenly stopped, all looking round, and one of the prettiest, a dainty little thing, stepped radiantly out to Irving, "Oh, oh, Mr Irving!" and, blushing and smiling, offered her pretty lips to be kissed, which Irving gallantly stooped down to accept, as well worth while. Whereupon, after some benedictory or Pastoral words, we went on our way. Probably I rallied him on such opulence of luck provided for a man, to which he could answer properly, as a *spiritual* Shepherd, not a secular

There were several Scotch Merchant-people, among those that came about him, substantial City men, of shrewd insight and good honest sense, several of whom seemed truly attached and reverent,—one William Hamilton, a very honest, shrewd and pious Nithsdale man, who wedded a Sister of Mrs Irving's by and by, and whom I knew till his death, was probably the chief of these, as an old good Mr Dinwiddie, very zealous, very simple and far from shrewd, might perhaps be reckoned at or near the other end of the series—a Sir Peter Laurie, afterwards of Aldermanic and even Mayoral celebrity, came also pretty often, but seemed privately to look quite from the aldermanic point of view, on Irving and the new "Caledonian Chapel" they were struggling to get built (old Mr Dinwiddie especially struggling),—and indeed once, to me at Paris a while after this, likened Irving and Dinwiddie to "Harlequin and Blast" whom he had seen in some Farce then current, Harlequin conjuring up the most glorious possibilities (like this of their "Caledonian Chapel"), and Blast loyally following him with swift destruction on attempting to help Sir Peter rather took to me, but not I much to him, a long-sighted satirical *Ev-Saddler* I found him to be, and nothing better,—nay something of an *Ev-Scotchman* too, which I could still less forgive. I went with the Irvings once to his house (Crescent, head of Portland Place) to a Christmas dinner this same year, very sumptuous, very cockneyish, strange and unadmirable to me,—and don't remember to have met him again. On our coming to live in London, he had rather grown in civic fame and



importance, and possibly (for I am not quite sure) on the feeble chance of his being of some help, I sent him some indication or other (a project belike, and my card with it, one of several *an-castles* I was anxiously building at that time before taking to *French Revolution* <sup>1</sup>),—but if so, he took no notice, gave no sign. Some years afterwards I met him in my rides in the Park, evidently recognisant, and willing or wishful to speak, but it never came to effect, there being now no charm in it. Then again, years afterwards, when *Latter-day Pamphlets* were coming out, he wrote me, on that of *Model Prisons* a knowing, approving, kindly and civil Letter, to which I willingly responded by a kindly and civil. Not very long after that I think, he died,<sup>1</sup>—riding diligently almost to the end. Poor Sir Peter, he was nothing of a bad man, very far other indeed, but had lived in a loud-roaring, big, pretentious and intrinsically barren sphere, unconscious wholly that he might have risen to the top in a considerably nobler and fruitfuller one. What a tragic, treacherous stepdame is vulgar Fortune to her children! Sir Peter's wealth has gone now in good part to somebody concerned in "discovering," not for the final time, "*the source of the Nile*" (blessings on it!)—a Captain Grant, I think, companion to a ditto Speke, having married Sir Peter's Scotch Niece and Lady Heiress, a good clever girl, once of *Haddington* who made her way to my Loved One on the ground of common country, in late years, and used to be rather liked here, in the few visits she made. Grant and she, who are now gone

<sup>1</sup> Sir Peter Laurie died 1861, aged 83

to India, called after marriage, but found nobody,—nor now ever will

By far the most distinguished Two, and to me the alone important, of Irving's London Circle, were Mrs Strachey (Mrs Buller's younger sister), and the "Noble Lady," Mrs Basil Montagu, with both of whom, and their households, I became acquainted by his means. One of my first visits was, along with him, to Goodenough-House, Shooter's Hill, where they [the Stracheys] oftenest were in Summer. I remember our entering the little winding avenue, and seeing in a kind of open conservatory or verandah, on our approach to the House, the effulgent vision of "dear Kitty," busied among the roses, and almost buried under them, who, on sight of us, glided hastily in. The before and after, and all other incidents of that first visit, are quite lost to me, but I made a good many visits there and in Town, and grew familiar with my ground.

Of Mrs Strachey I have spoken already, to this day, long years after her death, I regard her as a singular pearl of a woman, pure as dew, yet full of love, incapable of unverity to herself or others. *Examiner* Strachey had long been an Official (judge etc) in Bengal, where Brothers of his were, and Sons still are. eldest Son is now master, by inheritance, of the Family Estate in Somersetshire,—one of the Brothers had translated a curious old Hindoo Treatise on *Algebra*, which had made his name familiar to me. Edward (that, I think, was the Examiner's name) might be a few years turned of fifty, at this time, his Wife twenty years younger, with a number of pretty children,—the eldest hardly fourteen, and

only one of them a girl. They lived in Fitzroy Square, a fine-enough house, and had a very pleasant country establishment at Shooter's Hill, where in Summer time they were all commonly to be found. I have seldom seen a pleasanter place—a panorama of green, flowery, clean and decorated country all round, an umbrageous little Park, with roses, gardens, a modestly-excellent House,—from the drawing-room window a continual view of ships, multiform and multitudinous, sailing up or down the River (about a mile off), smoky London as background, the clear sky overhead, and, within doors, honesty, good sense and smiling seriousness the rule and not the exception. Edward Strachey was a genially-abrupt man, 'Utilitarian' and Democrat by creed, yet beyond all things he loved *Chaucer* and kept reading him. A man rather tacit than discursive, but willing to speak, and doing it well, in a fine tinkling, mellow-toned voice, in an ingenious aphoristic way,—had withal a pretty vein of quiz, which he seldom indulged in—a man sharply impatient of pretence, of sham and untruth in all forms,—especially contemptuous of "quality" pretensions and affectations, which he scattered grinningly to the winds. Dressed in the simplest form, walked daily to the India House and back, though there were fine carriages in store for the women part,—scorned cheerfully "the general humbug of the world," and honestly strove to do his own bit of duty, spiced by *Chaucer* and what else of inward harmony or condiment he had. Of religion in articulate shape, he had none, but much respected his Wife's, whom, and whose truthfulness in that as

in all things, he tenderly esteemed and loved A man of many qualities comfortable to be near At his house, both in Town and here, I have seen pleasant graceful people, whose style of manners, if nothing else, struck me as new and superior

Mrs Strachey took to me from the first, nor ever swerved it strikes me now, more than it then did, she silently could have liked to see "dear Kitty" and myself come together, and so continue near her, both of us, through life the good kind soul,—and Kitty, too, was charming in her beautiful *Begum* sort, had wealth abundant, and might perhaps have been charmed? None knows She had one of the prettiest smiles, a visible sense of humour (the slight merry curl of her upper lip, *right side* of it only, the carriage of her head and eyes, on such occasions, the quiet little things she said in that kind, and her low-toned hearty laugh, were noticeable), this was perhaps her most spiritual quality, of developed intellect she had not much, though not wanting in discernment Amiable, affectionate, graceful, might be called attractive (not *slim* enough for the title "pretty," not *tall* enough for "beautiful"), had something low-voiced, languidly harmonious, placid, sensuous, loved perfumes etc a Half-*Begum* in short, interesting specimen of the Semi-oriental English-woman Still lives, near Exeter (the prize of some idle Ex-Captain of Sepoys), with many children, whom she watches over with a passionate instinct, and has not quite forgotten me, as I had evidence once in late years, thanks to her kind little heart.

The Montagu establishment (25 Bedford Square) was still more notable, and as unlike this as possible

Might be defined, not quite satirically, as a most singular social and spiritual *ménagerie*, which, indeed, was well known and much noted and criticised in certain Literary and other circles Basil Montagu, a Chancery Barrister in excellent practice, hugely a *sage* too, busy all his days upon "Bacon's Works," and continually preaching a superfinest morality, about benevolence, munificence, health, peace, unfailing happiness,—much a bore to you by degrees, and considerably a humbug if you probed too strictly Age at this time might be about sixty, good middle stature, face rather fine under its grizzled hair (brow very prominent), wore oftenest a kind of smile, not false or consciously so, but insignificant, and as if feebly defensive against the intrusions of a rude world On going to Hinchinbrook long after, I found he was strikingly like the dissolute, questionable Earl of Sandwich (Foote's "Jemmy Diddler"<sup>1</sup>), who indeed had been father of him, in a highly tragic way! [His mother,] pretty Miss Ray, carefully educated for that function, Rev ex-dragoon Hackman taking this so dreadfully to heart that (being if not an ex-lover, a lover, Bless the mark!) he shot her as she came out of Drury Lane Theatre one night, and got well hanged for it.<sup>2</sup> The story

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle's memory was at fault here "Jemmy Twitcher" is the name of a character in Gay's *Beggars Opera*, and was a nickname applied to John, Earl of Sandwich, who died in 1792 Gray's satirical poem on Lord Sandwich, *The Candidate*, begins—

When sly Jemmy Twitcher had smuggled up his face,  
With a lick of court whitewash and pious grimace

"Jeremy Diddler" is the name of a character in Kenny's farce of *Farm the Hall*

<sup>2</sup> See Bowdell's *Jennet* (edited by P Fitzgerald, 3 vols London, 1844) ii p 362

is musty rather, and there is a loose foolish old book upon it called *Love and Madness* which is not worth reading. Poor Basil! no wonder he had his peculiarities, coming by such a genesis, and with a life of his own which had been brimful of difficulties and confusions! It cannot be said he managed it ill, but far the contrary, all things considered. Nobody can deny that he wished all the world rather well, could wishing have done it, express malice against anybody or anything he seldom or never showed. I myself experienced much kind flattery (if that were a benefit), much soothing treatment in his house, and learned several things there which were of use afterwards, and not alloyed by the least harm done me. But it was his wife, the "Noble Lady," who in all senses presided there, to whom I stand debtor, and should be thankful for all this.

Basil had been thrice married, children of all his marriages, and one child of the now Mrs Montagu's own by a previous marriage, were present in the house, a most difficult miscellany. Only the eldest child, Emily, the one daughter Basil had, succeeded in the world, made a good match (in Turin country somewhere), and is still doing well. Emily was Basil's only daughter, but she was not his wife's only one. Mrs Montagu had by her former marriage, which had been brief, one daughter, six or eight years older than Emily Montagu, Anne Skepper the name of this one, and York or Yorkshire her birthplace—a brisk, witty, prettyish, sufficiently clear-eyed and sharp-tongued young lady,—bride, or affianced, at this time, of the Poet "Barry Cornwall," i.e. Bryan W Procter, whose wife,

both of them still prosperously living, she now is Anne rather liked me, I her, an evidently true, sensible and practical young lady, in a house considerably in want of such an article. She was the *fourth* genealogic species among those children, visibly the eldest, all but Basil's first son (now gone), and did, and might well, pass for the flower of the collection.

Ruling such a miscellany of a household, with Basil Montagu at the head of it, and an almost still stranger miscellaneous society that fluctuated through it, Mrs Montagu had a problem like few others. But she, if anyone, was equal to it. A more constant and consummate *Artist* in that kind you could nowhere meet with, truly a remarkable and partly a high and tragical woman, now about fifty, with the remains of a certain queenly beauty, which she still took strict care of. A tall, rather thin figure, face pale, intelligent and penetrating, nose fine, rather large, and decidedly Roman, pair of bright, not soft, but sharp and small black eyes, with a cold smile as of inquiry in them, fine brow, fine chin, both rather prominent, thin lips always gently shut, as if till the inquiry were completed, and the time came for something of royal speech upon it. She had a slight Yorkshire accent, but spoke—Dr Hugh Blair could not have pecked a hole in it, and you might have printed every word,—as queenlike, gentle, soothing, measured, pretty royal,—to ards subjects. When she tried to love her. The voice was modulated, so, not inharmonious, yet there was something of metal in it, akin to that smile of the eye. One durst not quite love in a high

personage as she wished to be loved ! Her very dress was notable, always the same, and in a fashion of its own kind of widow's-cap fastened below the chin, darkish puce-coloured silk all the rest,—and (I used to hear from one who knew !) was admirable, and must have required daily the fastening of sixty or eighty pins

There were many criticisms of Mrs Montagu, often angry ones, but the truth is, she did love, and aspire to, human excellence,—and her road to it was no better than a steep hill of jingling boulders and sliding sand. There remained, therefore, nothing, if you still aspired, but to succeed ill, and put the best face on it. Which she amply did. I have heard her speak of the Spartan Boy who let the fox, hidden under his robe, eat him rather than rob him of his honour from the theft

In early life she had made some visit to Nithsdale (to the "Craiks of Arbigland"), and had seen Burns, of whom her worship continued fervent, her few recollections always a jewel she was ready to produce. She must have been strikingly beautiful at that time, and Burns's recognition and adoration would not be wanting,—the most royally courteous of mankind, she always defined him, as the first mark of his genius. I think I have heard that, at a Ball in Dumfries, she had frugally constructed some dress by sewing real flowers upon it, and shone, by that bit of art, and by her fine bearing, as the cynosure of all eyes. Her Father, I gradually understood (not from herself), had been a man of inconsiderable wealth or position, a Wine-merchant in York, his name Benson, her first Husband, Mr



Skepper, some young Lawyer there, of German extraction,—and that the “Romance” of her wedding Montagu, which she sometimes touched on, had been, prosaically, nothing but this. Seeing herself, on Skepper’s death, left destitute with a young girl, she consented to take charge of Montagu’s motherless confused family, under the name of “Governess,” bringing her own little Anne as appendage, had succeeded well, and better and better, for some time, perhaps some years, in that ticklish capacity, whereupon, at length, offer of marriage, which she accepted. Her sovereignty in the house had to be soft, judicious, politic, but it was constant and valid,—felt to be beneficial withal. “She is like one in command of a mutinous ship, which is ready to take fire!” Irving once said to me. By this time he had begun to discover that this “Noble Lady” was in essentiality an Artist, and hadn’t perhaps loved him so much as tried to buy love from him, by soft ministrations, by the skilfullest flattery liberally laid on. He continued always to look kindly towards her, but had now, or did by and by, let drop the old epithet. Whether she had done him good or ill, would be hard to say,—ill perhaps? In this liberal London, pitch your sphere one step lower than *yourself*, and you can get what amount of flattery you will consent to, everybody has it like paper-money for the printing, and will buy a small amount of ware by any quantity of it. The generous Irving did not find out this so soon as some surlier fellows of us!—

On one of the first fine mornings, Mrs Montagu, along with Irving, took me out to see Coleridge at

Highgate My impressions of the man and of the place are conveyed, faithfully enough, in the *Life of Sterling*, that first interview in particular, of which I had expected very little, was idle and unsatisfactory, and yielded me nothing,—Coleridge, a puffy, anxious, obstructed-looking, fattish old man, hobbled about with us, talking with a kind of solemn emphasis on matters which were of no interest (and even *reading* pieces in *proof* of his opinions thereon), I had him to myself once or twice, in *narrow* parts of the garden-walks, and tried hard to get something about *Kant* and Co from him, about “reason” *versus* “understanding,” and the like, but in vain nothing came from him that was of use to me, that day, or in fact any day The sight and sound of a sage who was so venerated by those about me, and whom I too would willingly have venerated, but could not,—this was all Several times afterward, Montagu, on Coleridge’s “Thursday Evening,” carried Irving and me out, and returned blessing Heaven (I not) for what we had received, Irving and I walked out more than once on mornings, too, and found the Dodona Oracle humanely ready to act,—but never (to me, nor to Irving either I suspect) explanatory of the question put Good Irving strove always to think that he was getting priceless wisdom out of this great man, but must have had his misgivings Except by the Montagu-Irving channel, I at no time communicated with Coleridge I had never, on my own strength, had much esteem for him, and found slowly, in spite of myself, that I was getting to have less and less

Early in 1825 was my last sight of him, a Print of Porson brought some trifling utterance, "Sensuality, such a *dissolutoi* even of the features of a man's face!"—and I remember nothing more. On my second visit to London (autumn 1831), Irving and I had appointed a day for pilgrimage to Highgate, but the day was one rain-deluge, and we couldn't even try. Soon after our settling here (late in 1834) Coleridge was reported to be dying, and died<sup>1</sup> I had seen the last of him almost a decade ago.

A great "worship of genius" habitually went on at Montagu's, from self and wife especially, Coleridge the Head of the *Lates* there, though he never appeared in person, but only wrote a word or two of Note on occasion. A confused dim miscellany of "geniuses" (mostly nondescript and harmlessly useless) hovered fitfully about the establishment,—I think those of any reality had tired, and gone away. There was much talk and laud of Charles Lamb and his *Pepe* etc, but he never appeared at his own house. I saw him once, once I gradually felt to have been enough for me. Poor Lamb, such a "divine genius" you could find in the then London only<sup>1</sup>. Hazlitt, whom I had a kind of curiosity about, was not now "of the admitted" (such the hint), at any rate, kept strictly away. There was a "Crabbe Robinson" (who had been in Weimar, etc, who was *first* of the "Own Correspondents" now so numerous, this is now his real distinction), there was a Mr Fearn "profound in Metaphysics"

<sup>1</sup> The Carlyles settled in Chelsea 10th of June. Coleridge died 25th July 1834.

(dull utterly, and dry), there was a *Dr* Sir Anthony Carlile, of name in Medicine, native of Durham, and a hard-headed fellow, but Utilitarian to the bone,—who had defined Poetry (to Irving once) as “the production of a rude *Agæ*!” We were clansmen, he and I, but had nothing of mutual attraction,—nor of repulsion either, for the man didn’t want for shrewd sense in his way. I heard continual talk and admiration of “the grand old English Writers” (Fuller, Sir Thomas Browne, and various others, *Milton* more rarely),—this was the orthodox strain, but there was little considerable of actual knowledge, and of critical appreciation almost nothing, at the back of it anywhere, and in the end it did one next to no good, yet perhaps not quite none,—deducting, in accurate balance, all the ill that might be in it.

Nobody pleased me so much in this miscellany as Procter (Barry Cornwall), who, for the fair Anne Skepper’s sake, was very constantly there. Anne and he were to have been, and were still to be, married, but some disaster or entanglement in Procter’s Attorney Business had occurred (some Partner defalcating or the like), and Procter, in evident distress and dispiritment, was waiting the slow conclusion of this, which, and the wedding thereupon, happily took place in winter following. A decidedly rather pretty little fellow, Procter, bodily and spiritually, manners prepossessing, slightly London-elegant, not unpleasant, clear judgment in him, though of narrow field, a sound honourable morality, and airy friendly ways. Of slight neat figure, vigorous for his size, fine genially

rugged little face, fine head,—something curiously dreamy in the eyes of him, lids *drooping* at the *outer* ends, into a cordially meditative and beautiful expression. Would break out suddenly, now and then, into opera attitude and "*La ci darem la mano*" for a moment,—had something of real fun, though in London style. Me he had invited to "his garret," as he called it; and was always good and kind, and so continues, though I hardly see him once in the quarter of a century.—The next to Procter in my esteem, and the considerably more important to me just then, was a young Mr Badams, in great and romantic estimation here, and present every now and then, though his place and business lay in Birmingham, a most cheery, gifted, really, amiable man,—with whom not long afterwards, I, more or less *romantically*, went to Birmingham, and, though *not* "cured of dyspepsia" there (as, not the least, had two or three singular and interesting months, as will be seen, if we have room. But indeed it is shameful to speak so much of myself in what was meant for another mainly. Badams, Procter etc were of Irving's London Circle, and came to me through Irving—that is my one excuse, so far as it will go.

me captive, or at any time perfect my admiration. The force and weight of what he urged was undeniable, the potent faculty at work, like that of Samson heavily striding along with the Gates of Gaza on his shoulders, but there was a want of spontaneity and simplicity, a something of strained and aggravated, of elaborately intentional, which kept jarring on the mind—one felt the bad element to be, and to have been, unwholesome to the honourable soul. The doors were crowded long before opening, and you got in by ticket but the first sublime rush of what once seemed more than popularity, and *had been* nothing more,—Lady Jersey “sitting on the Pulpit steps,” Canning, Brougham, Mackintosh, etc rushing, day after day,—was now quite over, and there remained only a popularity of “the people” (not of the *phibs* at all, but never higher than of the well-dressed *populus* henceforth), which was a sad change to the sanguine man. One noticed that at heart he was not happy, but anxious, struggling, questioning the future,—happiness, alas, he was no more to have, even in the old measure, in this world! At sight of Canning, Brougham, Lady Jersey and Co crowding round him, and listening week after week, as if to the message of Salvation, the noblest and joyfullest thought (I know this on perfect authority) had taken possession of his noble, too sanguine, and too trustful mind. “That Christian Religion was to be a truth again, not a paltry form, and to rule the world,—he, unworthy, even he the chosen instrument!” Mrs Strachey, who had seen him, in her own house, in these moods, spoke

to me once of this, and once only, reporting some of his expressions, with an affectionate sorrow Cruelly blasted all these hopes soon were,—but Irving never, to the end of his life, could consent to give them up That was the key to all his subsequent procedures, extravagances, aberrations, so far as I could understand them Whatever of blame (and there was on the very surface a fond *credulity* etc., with perhaps, farther down; and as root to such credulity, some excess of *Self-love*, which I define always as ‘love that others should love him,’ *not* as any worse kind), with that degree of blame Irving must stand charged, with that, and with no more, so far as I could testify or understand Good Mrs Oliphant, and probably her public, have much mistaken me on this point that Irving to the very last had abundant “popularity,” and confluence of auditors sufficient for the largest pulpit “vanity,” I knew and know,—but also that his once immeasurable quasi-celestial hope remained cruelly blasted, refusing the least *bud* farther, and that without this, all else availed him nothing Fallacious semblances of bud it did shoot out, again and again, under his continual fostering and forcing, but real bud never more — and the case, in itself, is easy to understand

He had much quiet seriousness, beautiful piety and charity, in this bad time of agitation and disquietude, and I was often honestly sorry for him — Here was still the old true man, and his new element seemed so false and abominable Honestly, though not so purely sorry as now, now when element and man are alike gone, and all that was or partook of

paltry in one's own view of them is also mournfully gone! He had endless patience with the mean people crowding about him, and jostling his life to pieces, hoped always they were not so mean, never complained of the uncomfortable huggermugger his life was now grown to be, took everything, wife, servants, guests, world, by the favourablest handle. He had infinite delight in a little baby boy there now was, went dandling about with it in his giant arms, tick-ticking to it, laughing and playing to it,—would turn seriously round to me, with a face sorrowful rather than otherwise, and say, "Ah, Carlyle, this little creature has been sent me to soften my hard heart, which did need it!"

Towards all distressed people, not absolutely criminal, his kindness, frank helpfulness, long-suffering and assiduity, were in truth wonderful to me. Especially in one case, that of a "Reverend Mr Macbeth," which I thought ill of from the first, and which did turn out hopeless. Macbeth was a Scotch Preacher, or Licentiate, who had failed of a Kirk,—as he deserved to do, though his talents were good,—and was now hanging very miscellaneously on London, with no outlooks that were not bog meteors, and a steadily increasing tendency to strong drink. He knew Town well, and its babble, and bits of temporary cynosures and frequented haunts, good and perhaps bad,—took me one evening to the Poet Campbell's, whom I had already seen, but *not* successfully. Macbeth had a sharp, sarcastic, clever kind of tongue, not much real knowledge, but was amusing to talk with on a chance walk through the streets,—older than myself by a dozen



years or more. Like him I did not; there was nothing of wisdom, generosity or worth in him; but in secret evidently dissembled a great deal of bankrupt vanity, which had taken quite the malignant shape. Undeniable envy, spite and bitterness looked through every part of him. A tallish slouching lean figure: face somewhat malignant black: not unlike the picture of a devil. To me he had privately much the reverse of Irving: I have seen him in Irving's and elsewhere (perhaps with a little drink on his stomach, poor soul), break out into oblique little spurts of positive spite—which I understood to mean more. "Young Jacksonapes getting yourself noticed and honored while a mature man of real genius is" etc! and took no notice of the silent comfort of self and neighbors.

This broken Macbeth had been hanging a good while about Irving. He had taken much earnest pains to rescue and arrest him on the edge of the precipice, but lately had begun to see that it was hopeless, and had rather left him to his own bad course. One evening it was in a very winter-weather and I was present, there came to Irving or to Mrs. Irving called from some dark Tarent in the Hibernian provinces, a pious old Nore from Macbeth: "Runn' again" tempted. O how cunningly to my cost!—over drinking these three weeks, and now no more than a score and no money and can't get out. Can't pay a passing stranger. The majority were of opinion "Tarry" it is totally hopeless! but Irving of a sudden takes of serious consideration declared "No more to pay"—and drove, got into a Hackney-coach wife and me proper way to a public house

the poor devil's tavern-score (some £2 10s or so, if I remember), and brought him groaning home out of his purgatory again,—for he was in much bodily suffering too. I remember to have been taken up to see him, one evening, in his bedroom (comfortable airy place), a week or two after he was in clean dressing-gown and night-cap, walking about the floor, affected to turn away his face, and to be quite “ashamed,” etc. etc, when Irving introduced me, which, as I could discern it to be painful hypocrisy merely, forbade my visit to be other than quite brief. Comment I made none, here or downstairs, was actually a little sorry, but without hope, and rather think this was my last sight of Macbeth. Another time, which could *not* now be distant, when he lay again under chalk-score and bodily sickness in his drinking-shop, there would be no deliverance but to the hospital, and there, I suppose the poor creature tragically ended. He was not without talent, had written a “*Book on the Sabbath*,” better or worse; and, I almost think, was understood, with all his impenitences and malignities, to have real love for his poor old Scotch Mother. After that night in the clean airy bedroom, I have no recollection or tradition of him,—a vanished quantity, hardly once in my thoughts, for above forty years past.—There were other disastrous or unpleasant figures whom I met at Irving's, a Danish fanatic of Calvinistic species (repeatedly, and had to beat him off); a good many fanatics of different kinds, one insolent “Bishop of Toronto,” triumphant Canadian, but *Aberdeen* by dialect (once only, from whom Irving defended me), etc etc,—but of these I say nothing.

Irving, though they made his House-element and Life-element continually muddy for him, was endlessly patient with them all.

Thus my first visit to London, lasted, with interruptions, from early June 1824 till [end of February] 1825, during which I repeatedly lodged for a little while at Irving's, his house ever open to me like a brother's, but cannot now recollect the times or their circumstances. The above recollections extend vaguely over the whole period,—during the last four or five months of which I had my own rooms in a Southampton Street near by, and was still in almost constant familiarity. My own situation was very wretched,—primarily from a state of health, which nobody could be expected to understand, or sympathise with, and about which I had as much as possible to be silent. The accursed hag, *Dyspepsia*, had got me bitted and bridled, and was ever striving to make my waking living Day a thing of ghastly Nightmares! I resisted what I could, never did yield or surrender to her, but she kept my heart right heavy, my battle very sore and hopeless,—one could not call it hope, but only desperate obstinacy, refusing to flinch that animated me. "*Obstinacy as of ten nails*," I have sometimes called it since,—but in candid truth there was something *corollary* in it too, and I have had through life, among my manifold unspeakable blessings, no other real boomer-anchor to ride by in the rough seas. Human "*obstinacy*" grounded on real human faith and insight, is good and the best.

All was change, too, at this time with me, all uncertainty. Mrs. Butler, the bright, the ardent, airy,

was a changeful lady ! The original program had been, We were all to shift to Cornwall, live in some beautiful Buller cottage there was, about East Looc or West (on her eldest Brother-in-law's property), with this as a fixed thing, I had arrived in London, asking myself "What kind of thing will it be?" It proved to have become already a thing all of the winds,—gone like a dream of the night (by some "accident" or other)<sup>1</sup> For four or five weeks coming, there was new scheme, followed always by newer and newest, all of which (by some "accident" or other) proved successively inexecutable. Greatly to my annoyance and regret, as may be imagined. The only thing that did ever take effect was a shifting of Charles and me, out to solitary lodgings at Kew Green,<sup>1</sup> an isolating of us two (*pro tempore*) over our lessons there. One of the dreariest and uncomfortablest things to both of us, lasted for about a fortnight,—till Charles (I suppose privately pleading) put an end to it, as intolerable, and useless both (for one *could* not "study," but only pretend to do it, in such an element !). Other wild projects rose rapidly, rapidly vanished futile, the end was, in a week or two after, I deliberately counselled that Charles should go direct for Cambridge next term, in the meantime making ready under some fit College "grinder," I myself, not without regret, taking leave of the enterprise. Which proposal, after some affectionate resistance on the part of Charles, was at length (rather suddenly, I recollect) acceded to by the elder people, —and, one bright summer morning (still vivid to me), I stepped out of a house in Foley Place, with polite

<sup>1</sup> In June 1824.

*farewell* sounding through me, and the thought as I walked along Regent Street, That here I was without employment henceforth Money was no longer quite wanting, enough of money for some years to come but the question, What to do next? was not a little embarrassing, and indeed was intrinsically abstruse enough

I must have been lodging again with Irving when this finale came I recollect, Charles Buller and I, a day or some days after quitting Kew, had rendezvoused by appointment in Regent *Square* (St. Pancras), where Irving and a great company were laying the foundation of the "Caledonian Chapel" (which still stands there), and Irving of course had to deliver an Address Of the Address, which was going on when we arrived, I could hear nothing, such the confusing crowd and the unfavourable locality (a muddy chaos of rubbish and excavations, Irving and the actors shut off from us by a circle of rude bricklayers' planks), but I well remember Irving's glowing face, streaming hair, and deeply-moved tones, as he spoke,—and withal that Charles Buller brought me some new futility of a Proposal, and how sad he looked, good youth, when I had directly to reply with "No, alas I cannot, Charles!"—This was but a few days before the Buller finale—

Twenty years after, riding discursively towards Tottenham, one summer evening, with the breath of the wind from Northward, and London hanging to my right hand, like a grim and vast sierra, I saw among the peaks, easily ascertainable, the high minarets of that Chapel, and thought with myself,

"Ah, you fatal *tombstone* of my lost Friend, and did a soul so strong and high avail only to build YOU!"—and felt sad enough and rather angry in looking at the thing

It was not many days after this of the Regent-Square Address, which was quickly followed by termination with the Bullers, that I found myself one bright Sunday morning<sup>1</sup> on the top of a swift Coach for Birmingham, with intent towards the "Mr Badams" above mentioned, and a considerable visit there,—for health's sake mainly! Badams and the Montagus had eagerly proposed and counselled this step, Badams himself was so eager about it, and seemed so frank, cheery, ingenious and friendly a man, that I had listened to his pleadings with far more regard than usual in such a case, and without assenting had been seriously considering the proposal for some weeks before (during the Kew-Green seclusion and perhaps earlier), he was in London twice or thrice, while things hung in deliberation, and was each time, more eager and persuasive on me. In fine I had assented, and was rolling along, through sunny England (the first considerable space I had yet seen of it), with really pleasant recognition of its fertile beauties, and air of long-continued cleanliness, contentment and well-being. Stony Stratford, Fenny Stratford, and the good people coming out of Church, Coventry, etc etc. all this is still a picture. Our coach was of the swiftest in the world, appointments perfect to a hair,—one and a half minutes the time allowed for changing horses,—our coachman, in dress etc., resembled a "sporting

<sup>1</sup> July 1824

*gentleman*," and scornfully called any groundling whom he disliked, "You Radical!" for one symptom I don't remember a finer ride,—as if on the Arrow of Abaris,<sup>1</sup> with lips shut and nothing to do but look. My reception at Ashsted (western end of Birmingham, not far from the great *Watt's* house of that name) and instalment in the Badams's domesticities must have well corresponded to my expectations, as I have now no memory of it. My visit in whole, which lasted for above three months, may be pronounced interesting, idle, pleasant, and successful, though singular.

Apart from the nimbus of Montagu romance in the first accounts I had got of Badams, he was a gifted, amiable and remarkable man,—who proved altogether friendly, beneficent, so far as he went with me, and whose final history, had I time for it, would be tragical in its kind! He was eldest boy of a well-doing but not opulent master-workman (Plumber, I think) in Warwick Town, got marked for the ready talents he showed, especially for some Picture he had, on his own resources and unaided inventions, copied, in the Warwick-Castle Gallery, with "wonderful success",—and in fine, was taken hold of by the famous Dr Parr and others of that vicinity, and lived some time as one of Parr's Scholars in Parr's House,—learning I know not what, not taking very kindly to the *Æolic Digamma* department, I should apprehend! He retained a kindly and respectful remembrance about this Trismegistus of the then Pedants, but always in brief

<sup>1</sup> The fery arrow received from Apollo, on which Abaris, at his own will, could travel at his pleasure.

quizzical form Having declared for Medicine, he was sent to Edinburgh College, studied there, for one session or more, but,—“being desirous to marry some beautiful lady-love” (said the Montagus), or otherwise determined on a shorter road to fortune,—he now cut loose from his patrons, and modestly planted himself in Birmingham, with purpose of turning to account some chemical ideas he had gathered in the Classes here, rivalling of *French* green vitriol by purely *English* methods (“no *hushs of grapes*, for you and your vitriol, ye English, your vitriol only *half* the selling-price of ours!”),—that I believe was it and Badams had fairly succeeded in it, and in other branches of the colour business, and had a modest manufactory, of twenty or fewer hands, and full of thrifty and curious ingenuity, at the outer corner of which, fronting on two streets, was his modest but comfortable dwelling-house, where I now lived with him as guest Simplicity, and a pure and direct aim at the essential (aim good, and generally successful),—that was our rule in this establishment, which was, and continued, always innocently comfortable and home-like to me. The lowest floor, opening rearward on the manufactory, was exclusively given up to an excellent “Mrs Barnet” (with husband and family of two) who, in perfection and in silence, kept house to us, her husband (whom Badams only tolerated for her sake) working out of doors among the twenty, we lived in the two upper floors, entering from our street door, and wearing a modestly civilised air Everything has still a living look to me in that place, not even the bad —— (who never showed his



badness) but has claims on me, still more the venerable lean and brown old "*Grandfather* Barnet," who used to go "for our Letters," and hardly ever *spoke* except by his fine and mournful old *eyes* these Barnets, with the workmen generally, and their quiet steady ways, were pleasant to observe,—but especially our excellent, sad, pure and silent Mrs Barnet, correct as an eight-day clock, and making hardly as much noise! Always dressed in modest black, tall, clean, well-looking, light of foot and hand, she was much loved by Badams as a friend of his Mother's, and a woman of real worth, bearing well a heavy enough load of sorrows (chronic "disease of the heart," to crown them, he would add) I remember the sight of her, on afternoons, in some lighted closet there was, cutting out the bit of bread for her children's luncheon, two clean pretty little girls, who stood looking up with hope, her silence, and theirs, and the fine human relation between them,—as one of my pleasant glimpses into English humble life. The younger of these pretty children died within few years, the elder, "*Bessy* Barnet," a creature of distinguished qualities who has had intricate vicissitudes, and fortunate escapes, staid with us here, as our first servant (servant and friend both in one) for about a year, then went home, and, after long and complete disappearance from our thoughts and affairs, re-emerged, most modestly triumphant, not very long ago, as Wife of the accomplished Dr ——— of St. Leonards,—in which capacity she showed a generous exaggerated "gratitude" to her old Mistress and me and set her-self and her Husband unceremoniously to help, in that our sad St. Leonards'

season of woe and toil, which has now ended in eternal peace to One of us, and cannot, nor can Dr ——'s and his "Bessy's" kindness in it, ever be forgotten while the Other of us still lingers here!— Ah me, ah me!—

My Birmingham visit, except as it continually kept me riding about in the open air, did nothing for me in the anti-dyspeptic way, but in the social and spiritually consolatory way, it was really of benefit. Badams was a horse-fancier, skilful on horseback, kept a choice two-or-three of horses here, and, in theory, professed the obligation to "ride for health," but very seldom by himself did it,—it was always along with me, and not tenth-part so often as I, during this sojourn. With me red "Taffy," the briskest of Welsh Ponies, went galloping daily far and wide, unless I were still better mounted (for exercise to the other high-going sort), and many were the pleasant rides I had in these Warwickshire lanes and heaths, and real good they did me,—if Badams's medicinal and dietetic formalities (to which I strictly conformed) did me little or none. His unaffected kindness, and cheerful human sociality and friendliness, manifest at all times, could not but be of use to me, too. Seldom have I seen a franker, trustier, cheerier form of human kindness than Badams's,—how I remember the laughing eyes and sunny figure of him, breaking into my room on mornings, himself half-dressed (*waistband in hand*, was a common aspect, and hair all flying) "What? Not up yet,—monster!" The smile of his eyes, the sound of his voice, were so bright and practically *true*, on these occasions. A tight

middle-sized handsome kind of man, eyes blue, sparkling, soft, nose and other features inclining to the pointed,—complexion, which was the weak part, tending rather to bluish, face always shaven bare, and no whiskers left a man full of hope, full of natural intellect, ingenuity, invention, essentially a gentleman, and really looked well, and jauntily aristocratic, when dressed for riding, or the like, which was always a careful preliminary Slight rusticity of accent rather did him good, so prompt, mildly emphatic and expressive were the words that came from him His faults were a too sanguine temper, and a defective inner *sternness* of *veracity*—true he was, but not sternly enough, and would listen to Imagination and delusive Hope, when Fact said No—for which two faults, partly recognisable to me even then, I little expected he would by and by pay so dear!

We had a pleasant time together, many pleasant summer rides and out-door talks and in,—to Guy's Cliff, Warwick Castle, Sutton Coldfield, Kenilworth, etc, on holidays, or miscellaneously over the furzy heaths, and leafy ruralities in common evenings I remember well a ride we made to Kenilworth, one Saturday afternoon, by the "Wood of Arden" and its monstrous old Oaks, on to the famous Ruin itself (*fresh* in the Scott Novels then), and a big jolly Farmer friend of Badams's, who lodged us, nice polite Wife and he, in a finely human way, till Monday morning,—with much talk about "Old Parr,"<sup>1</sup> in whose Parish, Hatton, we then were

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Parr born 1747 died 1825—nick named "Old Parr" after Thomas Parr who died in 1635 and was reported to be 152 years old

Old Parr would have been desirabler to me than the great old Ruin (now mainly a skeleton, part of it a coarse farmhouse, which was the most interesting part), but Badams didn't propose a call on his old Pedant Friend, and I could not be said to regret the omission (a saving of so much trouble withal) there was a sort of pride felt in their Dr Parr over all this region, yet everybody seemed to consider him a ridiculous old fellow, whose strength of intellect was mainly gone to self-will and fantasticality, they all mimicked his *hisp*, and talked of his wig and tobacco-pipe ("No pipe, no Parr!" his avowed principle when asked to dinner among fine people) The old man came to Edinburgh on a visit to Dr Gregory, perhaps the very next year, and there too, for a year following, there lingered tradition of good-natured grins and gossip, which one heard of but the man himself I never saw, nor, though rather liking him, sensibly cared to see

Another memorable gallop (we always went at galloping or cantering pace, and Badams was proud of his cattle and their really great prowess) was one morning out to Hagley, to the "top of the Clent Hill," for a view, after breakfasting at Hagley Tap, and then return Distance from Birmingham is about seventeen miles, "The Leasowes" (Poet Shenstone's Place) is about midway (visible enough, to left, in the level sun-rays, as you gallop *out*), after which comes a singular *Terra di Lavoro*, or wholly Metallic Country, Hales Owen the heart of it,—thick along the wayside, little forges built of single-brick, hardly bigger than sentry-boxes, and in each of

them, with bellows, stake and hammer, a woman busy making nails, fine tall young women, several of them, old others, but all in clean aprons, clean white calico-jackets (must have been *Monday* morning) their look industrious and patient,—seems as if all the nails of the world were getting made here, on very unexpected terms! Hales Owen itself had much sunk under the improved highway, but was cheerfully jingling, as we cantered through Hagley Tap, and its quiet Green, was all our own, not to be matched *out* of England Lord Lyttelton's mansion I have ever since in my eye as a noble-looking place, when his now Lordship comes athwart me, a rational, ruggedly considerate kind of man, whom I could have liked to see there (as he was good enough to wish), had there been a *Fortunatus' travelling-carpet* at my disposal Smoke-pillars many, in a definite, straight or spiral shape,—the Dudley "Black Country," under favourable omens,—visible from "the top of 'the Clent Hill'", after which, and the aristocratic roof-works, attics, and grand chimney-tops of Hagley mansion, the curtain quite drops

Of persons also I met some notable, or quasi-notable "Joe Parkes," then a small Birmingham Attorney, afterwards the famous Reform-Club ditto, was a visitor at Badams's in rare evenings, a rather pleasant talking, shrewd enough little fellow, with bad teeth, and a knowing lightly satirical way,—whom Badams thought little of, but tolerated for his (Joe's) Mother's sake, as he did Parkes Senior, who was her second husband The famous Joe I never saw again, though hearing often of his preferences, performances and him,—till he died, not

long since, "writing a new *Discovery of Junius*," it was rumoured, fit enough task for such a man Bessy Parkes (of "the Rights of Women") is a daughter of his. There were Phipsons, too, "Unitarian people," very good to me—a young fellow of them, still young though become a Pin Manufacturer, had been at *Erlangen* University, and could float along in light airy anecdotic fashion, by a time,—he re-emerged on me four or five years ago, living at Putney, head grown white from red, but heart still light, introducing a Chemical Son of his, whom I thought not unlikely to push himself in the world by that course. Kennedy (of Cambridge) afterwards great as "Master of Shrewsbury School," was polite to me, but unproductive. Others—But why should I speak of them at all? Accidentally one Sunday evening I heard the famous "Dr Hall" (of Leicester) preach—a flabby puffy, but massy, earnest forcible-looking man ('*homme alors célèbre*'), Sermon extempore, text, "God who cannot lie"—he proved beyond shadow of doubt, in a really forcible but most superfluous way, that God never lied ('had no need to do it,' etc., etc.) "As good prove that God never fought a duel!" sniffed Badams, on my reporting at home.

"Jemmy Belcher" was a smirking little dumpy Unitarian Bookseller, in the Bull-ring, regarded as a kind of curiosity and favourite among these people, and had seen me—one showery day I took shelter in his shop, picked up a new Magazine,—found in it a cleverish and completely hostile criticism of my *Wilhelm Meister*, of my Goethe and Self, etc., read it faithfully to the end, and have never set eye on it since. On stepping out, my bad spirits did not feel

much elevated by the dose just swallowed but I thought with myself, "This man is perhaps right on some points, if so, let him be admonitory!" And he was so (on a *Scotticism* or perhaps two), —and I did reasonably soon (in not above a couple of hours) dismiss him to the Devil, or to Jericho, as an ill-given *unserviceable* kind of Entity in my course through this world. It was De Quincey, as I often enough heard afterwards from foolish talking persons — "what matter who, ye foolish *talking* persons?" would have been my *silent* answer, as it generally pretty much was — I recollect too, how, in Edinburgh, a year or two after, poor De Quincey, whom I wished to know, was reported to tremble at the thought of such a thing, and did fly pale as ashes, poor little soul, the first time we actually met. He was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities, bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride, with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently-winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation. "What wouldn't one give to have him in a Box, and take him out to talk!" (That was *Her* criticism of him, and it was right good) A bright, ready and melodious talker, but in the end an inconclusive and long-winded. One of the smallest man-figures I ever saw, shaped like a pair of tongs, and hardly above five feet in all when he sat, you would have taken him, by candlelight, for the beautifullest little Child, blue-eyed, blonde-haired, sparkling face, — had there not been a something too, which said, "*Eccce*, this Child has been in Hell!" After leaving Edinburgh, I never

saw him, hardly ever heard of him His fate,—owing to opium etc,—was hard and sore, poor fine-strung, weak creature, launched so into the “Literary” career of ambition, and mother of dead-dogs—That peculiar kind of “meeting” with him was among the phenomena of my then Birmingham (“Bromwich-ham,” *Brumagem*, as you were forced to call it)

Irving himself once, perhaps twice, came to us, in respect of a “Scotch Chapel” newly set on foot there, and rather in tottering condition, Preacher in it one Crosbie, whom I had seen once at Glasgow in Dr Chalmers’s, a silent guest along with me, whose chief characteristic here was helpless dispiritment, under *dyspepsia* which had come upon him, hapless innocent lazy soul The people were very kind to him, but he was helpless,—and I think, soon after me, went away What became of the Chapel since, I didn’t hear The Rev Mr Martin of Kirkcaldy, with his Reverend Father, and perhaps a Sister, passed through Birmingham, bound for London, to christen some new child of Irving’s, and, being received in a kind of gala by those Scotch-Chapel people, caused me a noisy not pleasant day Another day, positively painful, though otherwise instructive, I had, in the Dudley “Black Country” (which I had once seen from the distance), roving about among the coal-and-metal mines there,—in company or neighbourhood of Mr Airy, now “Astronomer Royal,” whom I have never seen since Our party was but of four some opulent retired Dissenting Minister had decided on a holiday



ovation to Airy, who had just issued from Cambridge, as a Trismegistus, chief of Wranglers, and mathematical wonder, and had come to Birmingham, on visit to some footlicker whose people lived there "I will show Trismegistus Airy our Mine-Country," said the Reverend old Friend of Enlightenment, "and Mr G——, Airy footlicker, shall accompany!" That was his happy thought,—and Badams, hearing of it from him, had suggested me (not quite unknown to him) as a fourth figure. I was ill in health, but thought it right to go. We inspected blast furnaces, descended into coal-mines, poked about industriously into Nature's and Art's sooty arcana, all day (with a short recess for luncheon), and returned at night, in the Reverend's postchaise,—thoroughly wearied and disgusted, one of us at least. Nature's sooty arcana were welcome and even pleasant to me, Art's also more or less—thus, in the belly of the deepest mine, climbing over a huge jangle of new-loosened coal, there met me on the very summit a pair of small cheerful human *eyes* (face there was none discernible at first, so totally black was *it*, and so dim were our candles), then a ditto ditto of *lips* internally red, which I perceived, with a comic interest, were begging beer from me! Nor was Airy himself in the least an offence, or indeed sensibly a concern. A hardy little figure, of edacious energetic physiognomy, eyes hard, if strong, not fine, seemed three or four years younger than I, and to be, in secret, serenely, not insolently, enjoying his glory, which I made him right welcome to do, on those terms

In fact, he and I hardly spoke together twice or thrice, and had as good as no relation to each other. The old Reverend had taken possession of Airy, and was all day at his elbow. And to me, fatal allotment, had fallen the "Footlicker," one of the foolishhest, conceited ever-babbling blockheads I can remember to have met. What a day of *boiling* (not of the mine strata only)! I felt as if driven half-crazy, and mark it to this hour with *coal*!

But enough, and far more, of *my* Birmingham reminiscences! Irving himself had been with us, Badams was every few weeks up in London for a day or two, Mrs Strachey too, sometimes wrote to me. London was still in a sense my headquarters. Early in September (it must have been), I took kind leave of Badams and his daily kind influences,—hoping, both of us, it might be only temporary leave,—and revisited London, at least, passed through it, to Dover and the Sea-Coast, where Mrs Strachey had contrived a fine Seaparty, to consist of herself with appendages, of the Irvings and of me, for a few bright weeks! I remember a tiny bit of my journey, solitary on the coach-roof, between Canterbury and Bridge nothing else whatever of person or of place from Birmingham to that, nor anything immediately onwards from that!—The Irvings had a dim but snuggish house rented, in some street near the shore, and I was to lodge with them, Mrs Strachey was in a brighter place near by, detached new *row*, called *Liverpool Terrace* at that time (now buried among streets, and hardly discoverable by me last Autumn, when I pilgrimed thither again after forty-

two years!) Mrs. Strachey had Kitty with her, and was soon expecting her Husband. Both households were in full action, or daily getting into it, when I arrived<sup>1</sup>

We walked together, all of us together sometimes, at other times in threes or twos, we dined often at Mrs Strachey's, read commonly in the evenings at Irving's, Irving *reader*,—in Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island* for one thing, over which Irving strove to be solemn, and Kitty and I rather *not*, throwing in now and then a little spice of laughter and quiz. I never saw the book again, nor, in spite of some real worth it had, and of much half-real laudation, cared greatly to see it. Mrs Strachey, I suspect, didn't find the Sea-party so idyllic as her forecast of it, in a fortnight or so, Strachey came, and then there was a new and far livelier element of Anti-humbbug, Anti-*ennui*, which could not improve matters. She determined on sending Strachey, Kitty and me off on a visit to Paris for ten days, and having the Irvings all to herself. We went accordingly, saw Paris, saw a bit of France, nothing like so common a feat as now, and the memory of that is still almost complete, if that were a legitimate part of my subject.

The journey out,—weather fine, and novelty awaiting young curiosity at every step,—was very pleasant. Montreuil, Noailles, Abbeville, Beauvais interesting names start into facts, Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, (especially,) is alive in one from the first stage onwards,—at Newport, on the dirty little

<sup>1</sup> The same day Mrs. Strachey, Mr. Irving and Catherine were all in London before the Strachey's arrived.

street, you almost expect to see the Dead Ass lying! Our second night was at Beauvais glimpse of the old Cathedral next morning went for nothing (*was* in fact nothing to me), but the glimpse I had had, the night before, as we drove in this way, of the *Coffre-louise* near by, and in it no company but one tall, sashy, epauletted, well-dressed Officer striding dismally to and fro, was, and still is, impressive on me, as an almost unrivalled image of human *ennui*. I rode usually outside, fair Kitty sometimes, and Strachey oftener, sitting by me,—on the hindward seat carriage, I think, was Kitty's own, and except her maid we had no servants. Postilion could not tell me where "*Cergy*" was, when we were in the neighbourhood. Country in itself, till near Paris, ugly, but all gilded with the light of young lively wonder. Little scrubby Boys, playing at ball, on their scrubby patch of Parish-green, how strange! "*Charité, Madame, pour un pauvre misérable, qu'elle n'a bien besoin!*" sang the poor lame beggar girl, at the carriage door. None of us spoke French well, Strachey's grew ever worse as we proceeded, and at length was quite an amusement to hear. At Paris he gave it up altogether, and would speak nothing but English, which, aided by his vivid looks and gestures, he found, in shops and the like, to answer much better. "*Quelque chose à boire, Monsieur!*" said a respectful exceptional Postilion at the Coach-window, before quitting, "*Noug, vous avez drivé devilish slow!*" answered Strachey readily, in a positive half-quizzing tone. This was on the way home—followed by a storm of laughter on our part, and an angry blush on the Postilions.

From about Montmorency (with the Shadow of Rousseau!)—especially from St Denis, to Paris, the drive was quite beautiful, and full of interesting expectation. Magnificent broad highway, great old trees and then potherb gardens on each hand, all silent too, in the brilliant October afternoon, hardly one vehicle or person met,—till, on mounting the shoulder of Montmartre, an iron-gate, and *douanier* with his brief question before opening, and Paris wholly and at once lay at our feet. A huge bowl, or deepish *sauce* of seven miles in diameter, not a breath of smoke or dimness anywhere, every roof and dome and spire and chimney-top clearly visible, and the skylights sparkling like diamonds. I have never, since or before, seen so fine a view of a Town. I think the fair Miss Kitty was sitting by me, but the curious *speckled straw-hats* and costumes and physiognomies of the Faubourg St. (*Fashionable*—I forget it at this moment!) are the memorable circumstance to me. We alighted in the Rue de la Paix (clean and good Hotel, not now a Hotel), admired our rooms all covered with mirror, our grates, or *grate-backs*, each with a *Cupidon* cast on it,—and roved about the Boulevards, in a happy humour, till sunset or later. Decidedly later, in the still dusk, I remember sitting down, in the Place Vendome, on the steps of the Column there, to smoke a cigar, hardly had I arranged myself, when a bustle of military was heard round me—clean, trim handsome soldiers, blue-and-white, ranked themselves in some quosity, drummers and drums especially faultless, and after a *Shoulder Arms* or so, marched off in parties, drums fiercely and finely

clangouring their *tan-tan-plan*,—setting the watch or watches of this human city, as I understood it. “Ha, my tight little fellows in blue, you also have got drums, then, none better,—and all the world is of kin, whether it all agree or not!” was my childlike reflection, as I silently looked on

Paris proved vastly entertaining to me, ‘walking about the streets would, of itself’ (as Gray the poet says), ‘have amused me for weeks’ I met two young Irishmen, who had seen me once at Irving’s, who were excellent *accions*. They were on their way to “the Liberation of Greece,” a totally wild-goose errand, as then seemed to me,—and as perhaps they themselves secretly guessed,—but which entitled them to call on everybody for an “autograph to our album,” their main employment just now. They were clever enough young fellows, and soon came home again out of Greece the considerably taller and cleverer, black-haired and with a strong Irish accent, was called Tennent, whom I never saw again, the milky, smaller blondine figure, cousin to him, was Emerson,—whom I met twenty-five years afterwards, at Allan Cunningham’s, as *Sir Emerson Tennent*,<sup>1</sup> late Governor of Ceylon, and complimented, simpleton that I was, on the now finely *brown* colour of his *hair*! We have not met since. There was also, of their acquaintance, a pleasant Mr Malcolm, “E-Lieutenant of the *Forty-second*,” native of the Orkney Islands, only son of a Clergyman there, who, as a young ardent lad, had joined Wellington’s Army at

<sup>1</sup> There is a trifling error here. Allan Cunningham was not alive “twenty five years afterwards” (died 1842)—Emerson Tennent died in 1860, aged 65

the *Siege of St Sebastian*, and got badly wounded, lame for life, at the *Battle of Thoulouse* that same season. Peace coming, he was invalided on half-pay, and now lived with his widowed mother, in some clean upper-floor in Edinburgh, on frugal, kind and pretty terms, hanging loosely by Literature, for which he had some talent. We used to see him in Edinburgh, with pleasure and favour, on setting up our own poor Household there. He was an amiable, intelligent little fellow, of lively talk and speculation, always cheerful, and with a traceable vein of humour, and of pathos withal (there being much of sadness and affection hidden in him),—all kept, as his natural voice was, in a fine *low* melodious tone. He wrote, in Periodicals, ‘*Annals*’ and the like vehicles, really pretty verses, and was by degrees establishing something like a real reputation, which might have risen higher and higher, in that kind, but his wound still hung about him, and he soon died,—a year or two after our quitting Edinburgh, which was the last we saw of him. His mother we had never seen.

Poor little Malcolm, he quietly loved his mother very much, his vanished father too, and had pieties and purities, very alien to the wild reckless ways, of practice and of theory, which the Army had led him into! Most of his army habitudes (with one private exception, I think, nearly *all*) he had successfully washed off from him, to the reprobate ‘theories’ he had never been but heartily abhorrent. “No God, I tell you,—and will prove it to you on the spot!” said some elder blackguard Lieutenant, among a group of them, in their tent one evening (a Hanoverian, if I recollect). “On the spot, none!”—“How

then?" exclaimed Ensign Malcolm much shocked. The Hanoverian lifted his canteen, turned the bottom of it up, "Empty, you see, we have no more rum" then holding it aloft into the air, said, in a tone of request, "Fill us that," paused an instant, turned it bottom up, empty still, and with a victorious glance at his companions, set it down again, as a thing that spoke for itself. This was one of Malcolm's war-experiences, of which he could pleasantly report a great many. These, and the physical agonies and horrors witnessed and felt, had given him a complete disgust for War. He could not walk far, always had a marked halt in walking, but was otherwise my pleasantest companion in Paris.

Poor *Louis Dn-luit* had been "lying in state," as we passed through St Denis, Paris was all plastered with placards, '*Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi*'—announcing, from Châteaubriand, a Pamphlet of that title. I made no effort to see Châteaubriand, did not see his Pamphlet either in the Streets, Galleries, *Cafés*, I had enough and to spare. Washington Irving was said to be in Paris, a kind of lion at that time, whose Books I somewhat esteemed. One day the Emerson Tennent people bragged that they had engaged him to breakfast with us at a certain *Café* next morning, we all attended duly, Strachey among the rest, but no Washington came,— "Couldn't rightly come," said Malcolm to me in a judicious *aside*, as we cheerfully breakfasted without him. I never saw Washington at all, but still have a mild esteem of the good man. To the Louvre Gallery alone or accompanied, I went often, got



rather faintish good of the Pictures there, but at least no *harm*,—being mute and deaf on the subject. Sir Peter Laurie came on me there one day, took me to dinner, and plenty of hard-headed London talk. Another day, nobody with me and very few in the Gallery at all, there suddenly came storming past, with dishevelled hair, and large besoms in their hand, which they shoved out on any bit of paper or the like, a row of wild Savoyards, distractedly proclaiming, "Le Roi!" "Le Roi!" and almost oversetting people, in their fierce speed to clear the way. Le Roi, *Charles Dix* in person, soon appeared accordingly with three or four attendants, very ugly people, especially one of them (who had blear-eyes and small bottle-nose, never identifiable to my inquiries since),—Charles himself was a swart, slightish insipid-looking man, but with much the air of a gentleman, insipidly endeavouring to smile, and be popular, as he walked past, sparse public indifferent to him, and silent nearly all. I had a real sympathy with the poor gentleman, but could not bring up the least *Vive le Roi*, in the circumstances! We understood he was going to look at a certain Picture, or Painting now on the easel, in a room at the very end (*entrance-end*) of the Gallery, which one had often enough seen, generally with profane mockery if with any feeling, Picture of or belonging to the Birth or Baptism of what they called "the Child of Miracle" (the assassinated Duc de Berri's posthumous child, *hodie* "Henri V *in partibus*"),—Picture as yet distressingly ugly, mostly in a smear of dead-colours, brown and even green, and with a kind of horror in the subject of it as well. How

tragi-cal are men, once more,—how merciless withal to one another! I had not the least real *pity* for *Charles Dix's* pious pilgri-ming to such an object,—the poor *Mother* of it, and her immense hopes and pains, I did not even think of then. This was all I ever saw of the Legitimate Bourbon Line, with which, and its tragedies, I was to have more concern within the next ten years.

My reminiscences of Paris, and its old aspects and localities, were of visible use to me in writing of the *Revolution* by and by, the rest could only be reckoned under the head of amusement, but had its vague profits withal, and still has. Old Legendre,<sup>1</sup> the Mathematician (whose *Geometry* I had translated in Edinburgh) was the only man of real note with whom I exchanged a few words. A tall, bony, gray, old man, who received me with dignity and kindness, introduced me to his Niece, a brisk little brown gentlewoman who kept house for him, asked about my stay here, and finding I was just about to go, answered "*Diantic!*" with an obliging air of regret. His rugged, sagacious, sad and stoical old face is still dimly present with me. At a meeting of the *Institut* I saw, and well remember, the figure of Trismegistus Laplace, the skirt of his long blue-silk *dressing-gown* (such his costume, unique in the place, his age and his fame being also unique) even touched me as he passed, on the session's rising. He was tall, thin, clean, serene, his face, perfectly smooth as a healthy man of fifty's, bespoke intelligence keen and ardent, rather than deep or great, in the eyes was a dreamy smile, with something of pathos in it and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Adrien Marie Legendre, born 1752, died 1833

something of contempt. The session itself was profoundly stupid, some lout of a Provincial reading about *Veis à Soie*,—and big Vauquelin the chemist (noticed by me) fallen sound asleep. Strachey and I went one evening to call upon a M de Chézy,<sup>1</sup> Professor of *Persic*, with whom he, or his brother and he, had communicated while in India. We found him high aloft, but in a clean snug apartment, burly, hearty, glad enough to see us,—only that Strachey would speak no French, and introduced himself with some shrill-sounding sentence, the first word of which was clearly "*Salaam*!" Chézy tried lamely, for a pass or two, what Persian he could muster, but hastened to get out of it,—and to talk even to me who owned to a little French, since Strachey would own to none. We had rather an amusing twenty minutes, Chézy a glowing and very emphatic man — "*ce ludeux reptile de Langlès*," was a phrase he had once used to Strachey's Brother, of his chief French rival in the Persic field!—I heard Cuvier lecture, one day fine strong German kind of face, ditto intelligence, as manifested in the Lecture, which reminded me of one of old Dr Gregory's in Edinburgh. I was at a sermon in Ste Gèneviève's, main audience 500 or so of serving-maids, preacher a dizened fool, in *houglass* hat, who ran to and fro in his balcony or pulpit, and seemed much contented with himself, heard another foolish preacher, Protestant, at the *Oiratoire* ("*Console-toi, O France*!" on the death of *Louis Dix-huit*),—looked silently into The *Morgue* one morning (infinitely better *Sermon*,

<sup>1</sup> Antoine Leonard de Chézy, Professor of *Sanskrit*, College de France born 1773 died 1832. Langlès was Professor of *Persic*.

that stern old grayhaired Corpse lying there!),<sup>1</sup> looked into the Hôtel-Dieu, and its poor sick-beds, once, was much in the Pont-Neuf region (*on tond les chiens et coupe les chats, et va en ville*, etc etc), much in the Palais Royal and adjacencies,—and, the night before leaving, found I ought to visit one Theatre, and, by happy accident, came upon Talma playing there. A heavy shortish numb-footed man, face like a warming-pan for size, and with a strange most ponderous yet delicate expression in the big dull-glowing black eyes and it incomparably the best actor I ever saw. Play was *Œdipe* (Voltaire's very *first*), place the *Théâtre Français*. Talma died within about a year after.<sup>2</sup>

Of the journey home I can remember nothing but the French part,—if any part of it were worth remembering—at Dover I must still have found the Irvings,<sup>3</sup> and poor outskirts, and insignificant fractions, of solitary Dialogues on the Kent shore (far inferior to our old *Fife* ones!) have not yet entirely vanished *e.g.* strolling together on the beach, one evening, we had repeatedly passed at some distance certain building operations, upon which, by and by, the bricklayers seemed to be getting into much vivacity,—crowding round the last gable-top, in fact, just about finishing their House there. Irving grasped my arm, said in a low tone of serious emotion “See, they are going to bring out their topstone

<sup>1</sup> See *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle* (Macmillan and Co., 1886),  
 II 282

<sup>2</sup> 19th October 1826

<sup>3</sup> The trip lasted only twelve days. They returned to Dover 6th November 1824, the Irvings were not there, had left for London “only a few hours before”

with shouting!" I inquired of a poor man, what it was, "You see, Sir, they gets allowance of beer," answered he, that was all, a silent deglutition of some beer! Irving sank from his Scriptural altitudes, I, no doubt, profanely laughing rather. There are other lingering films of this sort, but I can give them no date, of before or after and find nothing quite distinct till that of our posting up to London, I should say, of the Stracheys posting, who took me as guest,—the Irvings *being* now clearly gone. Canterbury and the Shrine of St. Thomas I did see, but it must have been before. We had a pleasant drive throughout, weather still sunny though cool, and about nine or ten P.M., of the second day, I was set down at a little Tavern on Shooter's Hill, where some London Mail or Diligence soon picked me up (fare one shilling, transaction then very common), and speedily landed me within reach of hospitable Pentonville (4 Myddelton Terrace there), which gave me a welcome like itself. There I must have staid a few days, and not above a few.

I was now again in London (probably about the middle of November),<sup>1</sup> hither after much sad musing and moping I had decided on returning for another while. My wretched *Schiller* (of which I felt then the intrinsic wretchedness, or utter *leanness* and commonplace) was to be stitched together from the *London Magazine*, and put forth with some trimmings and additions as a Book —"£100 for it, on publication in that shape" (*zero* till then), that was the bargain made, and I had come to fulfil that,—almost more uncertain than ever about all beyond that. I soon

<sup>1</sup> Arrived in London on the 9th November

got lodgings in Southampton Street, Islington, in Irving's vicinity, and did henceforth, with my best diligence, endeavour to fulfil that,—at a far slower rate than I had expected. I frequently called on Irving (he never or not often on me, which I did not take amiss), and frequently saw him otherwise but have already written down miscellaneously most of the remembrances that belong to this specific date of months. On the whole, I think now, he felt a good deal unhappy, probably getting deeper and deeper sunk, in manifold cares of his own, and that our communication had not the old copiousness and flowing freedom, nay that even since I left for Birmingham there was perhaps a diminution. London "Pulpit Popularity," the smoke of that foul witch's cauldron;—there never was anything else to blame! I stuck rigorously to my work, to my Badams regimen though it did little for me. I was sick of body and of mind, in endless dubiety, very desolate and miserable, and the case itself, since nobody could help, admonished me to silence. One day, on the road down to Battle-Bridge, I remember recognising Irving's broad hat, atop, amid the tide of passengers, and his little child sitting on his arm. Wife probably near by,—“Why should I hurry up, they are parted from me, the old days are no more!” was my sad reflection in my sad humour.

Another morning, what was wholesomer and better, happening to notice, as I stood looking out on the bit of green under my bedroom window, a trim and rather pretty Hen actively paddling about and picking up what food might be discoverable “Sec,” I said to myself, “look, thou fool! Here is

a two-legged creature with scarcely half a thimbleful of poor brains, thou call'st thyself a man, with nobody knows how much brain, and reason etc dwelling in it, and behold, how the one *life* is regulated, and how the other<sup>1</sup> In God's name, concentrate, collect, whatever of 'reason' thou hast, and direct it on the one thing needful!"—Irving, when we did get into intimate dialogue, was affectionate to me as ever, and had, as always to the end, a great deal of practical sense, and insight into things about him but he could not much help me, how could anybody but myself? By degrees I was doing so, taking counsel of that *Symbolic* HEN!—and settling a good few things first and most of all, That I would, renouncing ambitions, "fine openings," and the advice of all bystanders, and friends *who didn't know, go home* to Annandale, were this work done, provide myself a place where I could ride, follow regimen, and be free of *noises* (which were unendurable), till if possible I could recover a little health Much followed out of that, all manner of adjustments gathering round it. As head of these latter, I had offered to let my Dearest be free of me, and of any virtual engagement she might think there was, but she would not hear of it, not of that, the Noble Soul, but stood resolved to share my dark lot along with me, be [it] what it might. Alas, her love was never known completely to me, and how celestial it was, till I had lost her! "Oh for one five-minutes more of her," I have often said, since April last, "to tell her with what perfect love, and admiration as of the beautifullest of known human souls, I did intrinsically always regard her!" But all minutes of the time are irre-

vocably past —be wise, all ye living, and remember that time *pass* and does not return!—

I had, apart from regular work upon *Scott's*, a good deal of talking with people, and social moving, about which was not disagreeable. With Allan Cunningham I had made ready acquaintance, a cheerful social man,—“solid Dumfriesshire man with a surface polish given him,” was one good judge’s definition years afterwards! He not at once *into Nithdale* when you talked with him, which, though clever and satirical, I didn’t very much enjoy. Allan had sense and shrewdness on all points, especially the practical, but, *out of Nithdale*, except for his perennial good-humour, and quiet cautions (which might have been exemplary to me), was not instructive. I was at the christening of one of Allan’s children, over in Irving’s where there was a cheery evening, and the Cunninghams to sleep there, one other of the Guests, a pleasant enough Yorkshire youth, going with me to a spare-room I could command. My commonest walk was fieldwards, or down into the City (by many different old lanes and routes), more rarely, by Portland Place (*Porter Square* and Mrs Strachey’s, probably *first*) to Piccadilly and the West End. One muddy evening there came to me, what enlightened all the mirk and mud, ‘by the Herren Grafen von Bentinck’s’ (Servant), a short Letter from Goethe in Weimar<sup>1</sup>. It was in answer to the copy of *Wilhelm Meister* which (doubtless with some profoundly reverent bit of Note) I had despatched to him six months ago, without answer till now. He was kind, though distant, brief, apologised,

<sup>1</sup> Middle of December 1824



by his 'great age (*hohen Jahren*),' for the delay, till at length the Herren Grafen von Bentinck's passage homewards had operated on him as a hint to do the needful,—'and likewise to procure for both parties,' (Herren Grafen and Self!) 'an agreeable acquaintance,' of which latter, naturally, neither I nor the Herren Grafen ever heard more. Some twenty years afterwards a certain Lord George Bentinck, whom newspapers called the "*stable minded*," from his previous *tuif* propensities, suddenly quitting all these, and taking to Statistics and Tory Politics, became famous or noisy for a good few months, chiefly by intricate *Statistics* and dull vehemence, so far as I could see, a stupid enough phenomenon for me, till he suddenly died,<sup>1</sup> poor gentleman,—I then remembered that this was probably one of the Herren Grafen von Bentinck, whose acquaintance I had missed, as above.

One day Irving took me with him on a curious little errand he had. It was a bright Summer morning, must therefore have preceded the Birmingham and Dover period. His errand was this. A certain loquacious extensive Glasgow *Publisher* (Dr Chalmers's, especially, had been a schoolmaster, "Collins" perhaps his name) was in London for several weeks on business, and often came to Irving, —wasting (as I rather used to think) a good deal of his time, in zealous discourse about many vague things, in particular, about the villany of common Publishers, how, for example, on their "*Half-profits System*," they would show the poor Author a Printers Account pretending to be paid in full,

Printer's signature visibly appended,—Printer having really touched a sum less by 25 per cent,—and *sic de ceteris*; all an arranged juggle, to cheat the poor Author, and sadly convince him that his moiety of profit was nearly or altogether *zero* divided by *two*! Irving could not believe it, denied stoutly on behalf of his own Printer, one Bensley, a noted man in his craft,—and getting nothing but negatory smiles, and kindly but inexorable contradiction, said he would go next morning and see. We walked along, somewhere Holborn-wards, found Bensley and Wife in a bright, quiet, comfortable room, just finishing breakfast a fattish solid, rational and really amiable-looking pair of people, especially the Wife, who had a fine plump cheerfully experienced matronly air,—by both of whom we (i.e. Irving, for I had nothing to do but be silent) were warmly and honourably welcomed and constrained at least to sit since we would do nothing better. Irving with grave courtesy laid the case before Bensley (perhaps showed him his old signature and account), and asked, If that was or was not really the sum he had received? Bensley, with body and face, writhed uneasily, evidently loth to lie, but evidently obliged by the laws of trade to do it. "Yes, on the whole, that was the sum!" Upon which we directly went our ways—both of us convinced I believe, though only one of us said so. Irving had a high opinion of men and was always mortified when in any instance, he found it no longer tenable.

Another time (this also was of the Ante-Birmingham time) we made an excursion with certain ornate City gentlemen called Jupp, father and three sons;

and had a day's boating, from London Bridge to Twickenham, perhaps to Teddington, and back ! The three young Jupps were fine handsome gentlemanly fellows, of City type, so was Jupp senior, a veteran boater of renown, full of Thames "wit" and the like, his house, in some cleanest, stillest brick-paved Court near Guildhall, where he held some lucrative office, was a picture of opulent comfort, so was, or so had been, the good little plumpish elderly Mrs Jupp, still rosy, though now wrinkly as well, and manifesting sickly maternal anxieties (of *anti*-boating kind), which Jupp senior promptly discomfited with gay City repartee as fast as they rose. One of the Sons had perhaps been at Cambridge, at anyrate, the youngest of them, who much fell to my share, had a beautiful passion to go to some such place, as to the *summum bonum* of man,—and there was with us, of their acquaintance, an actual Cantab, a pleasant polite little fellow, who talked intelligently with me upon College matters, and didn't row. My Scotch '*Mæa mater est mala sus*' (which needs only two commas to make it perfectly respectful 'Go, mother, the swine is eating the apples') he could not interpret, but said, Had it been pronounced in [the] English way, the last vowel of '*mæa*' would have helped him Legendre's *Geometry*, etc he pretended to know, and didn't (being in fact weak on the mathematical side),—"Oh no, *not* translated, I assure you!"—Upon which, "Bless you, Sir, I translated it myself!" somewhat took him aback, and the tone on that string grew low enough. But the grand novelty was Jupp senior's wit, "*Mens tuns ego*," when he took snuff, and so on. He was very good-humoured and

absurd,—escorting me, out of the wherry, towards some Tavern (on an Island about Twickenham,—*laurel* kind of Tavern, nothing but tea in it), Jupp senior was spoken to, from a first floor window, by one of his Sons. "Good Heavens!" cried he, starting violently. "Speak? I thought you were the Sign of the Saracen's Head!"—It was 10 P.M. or so before we victoriously "hot London Bridge," the perils of which feat had been an interjectional topic with our junior Jupps, but were to me, at that time, profoundly unknown and indifferent. Irving, during this whole day, had been passive, taciturn, kindly taking in the summer glories of land and river, and the human kindness of the Jupps, but looking serious, pensive, almost sad, and preferring silence. The worship of these Jupps was hearty, but too evidently worth almost nothing. Worship as to a mere Katerfelto or thing wondered at. "See, how the people turn round on him!" said the youngest Jupp to me, as we walked the streets. I never went boating more, nor probably did Irving one time quite enough.<sup>1</sup>

Irving was sorrowfully occupied at this period, as I now perceive, in scanning and surveying the *wrong-side* of that immense Popularity, the outer or right side of which had been so splendid and had given rise to such sacred and glorious hopes. The crowd of people flocking round him continued, unabated, but still superabundant quantity and vivacity, but it was not of the old high quality any more, the thought that Christian religion was again to dominate

<sup>1</sup> This unimportant paragraph, written on a *rider* (or attached slip) which had got displaced in the MS., was omitted in the first edition.

all minds, and the world to become an Eden by his humble thrice-blessed means, was fatally declaring itself to have been a dream. And he could not consent to believe it such, never he! That was the secret of his inward quasi-desperate resolutions, breaking out into the wild struggles, and clutchings, towards the unattainable, the unregainable, which were more and more conspicuous in the sequel. He was now, I gradually found, listening to certain Interpreters of Prophecy, thinking to cast his own great faculty into that hopeless quagmire along with them. These and the like resolutions, and the dark humour which was the mother of them, had been on the growing hand, during all this first London visit of mine, and were fast coming to outward development by the time I left for Scotland again.

About the beginning of March 1825, I had at length, after fierce struggling and various disappointments from the delay of others, got my poor business winded up, *Schiller* published, paid for,—left to the natural neglect of mankind (which was perfect, so far as I ever heard, or much cared),—and, in humble, but condensed, resolute and quiet humour, was making my bits of packages, bidding my poor adieus, just in act to go. Everybody thought me headstrong and foolish, Irving less so than others, though he too could have no understanding of my dyspeptic miseries, my intolerable sufferings from *noises* etc etc. He was always kind, and spoke hope, if personal topics turned up. Perhaps it was the very day before my departure, at least it is the last I recollect of him, we were walking in the streets, multifariously dis-

coursing a dim gray day, but dry and airy,—at the corner of Cockspur Street, we paused for a moment, meeting “Sir John Sinclair” (*Statistical Account of Scotland*, etc etc), whom I had never seen before, and never saw again. A lean old man, tall but stooping, in tartan cloak, face very wrinkly, nose blue, physiognomy vague and with [*sic*] distinction (as one might have expected it to be) he spoke to Irving with benignant respect, whether to me at all I don’t recollect. A little farther on in Parliament Street, somewhere near the *Admnalty* (that now is, and perhaps then was), we ascended certain stairs, narrow, newish, wooden staircase the last of them, and came into a bare clean comfortless official little room (fire gone out), where an elderly official little gentleman was seated, within rails, busy in the red-tape line. This was the Honourable Something or other, great in Scripture Prophecy, in which he had started some sublime new idea, well worth prosecuting, as Irving had assured me. Their mutual greetings were cordial and respectful, and a lively dialogue [ensued] on Prophetic matters, especially on the sublime new idea,—I strictly unparticipant, sitting silently apart till it were done. The Honourable Something had a look of perfect politeness, perfect silliness, his face, heavily wrinkled, went smiling and shuttling about, at a wonderful rate, and in the smile there seemed to me to be lodged a frozen sorrow, as if bordering on craze. On coming out, I asked Irving, perhaps too markedly, “Do you really think that gentleman can throw any light to you on anything whatever?” To which he answered, good-naturedly, but in a grave

tone, "Yes, I do" Of which the fruits were seen before long This is the last thing I can recollect of Irving in my London visit,—except perhaps some gray shadow of him giving me Farewell, with express "Blessing"

I paused some days at Birmingham, got rich Gifts sent after me by Mrs Strachey (beautiful desk, gold pencil, etc, which were soon *Another's*, ah me, and are still here!)<sup>1</sup>—I saw Manchester too, for the first time (strange *Bagman* ways, in the Palace Inn there),—walked to Oldham, savage-looking scene of Sunday morning, old schoolfellow of mine, very stupid but very kind, being *Curate* there, shot off, too, over the Yorkshire Moors to Marsden, where another boy-and-College-friend of mine was (George Johnston, since Surgeon in Gloucester), and spent three dingy but impressive days in poking into those mute wildernesses and their rough habitudes and populations At four o'clock, in my Palace Inn (Boots having forgotten me), awoke by good luck of myself, and saved my place on the coach roof Remember the Blackburns, Boltons and their smoke-clouds, to right and to left, grimly black amid the gray March winds Lancashire was not all smoky then, but only smoky in parts Remember the Bush Inn at Carlisle, and quiet luxurious shelter it yielded for the night, much different from now ("Betty, a pan o' coals!" shouted the waiter, an Eskdale man by dialect, and in five minutes the trim Betty had done her feat, and your clean sleek bed was comfortably warm) At Ecclefechan, next

<sup>1</sup> On one handle of the desk is engraved THOMAS CARPENTER and the other LIESITAS, VELITAS, PALPEITAS

day, within two miles or so of my Father's, while the coach was changing horses, I noticed through the window my little Sister Jean earnestly looking up for me, she, with Jenny the youngest of us all, was at School in the village, and had come out daily of late to inspect the coach in hope of me,—always in vain till this day her bonny little blush, and radiancy of look, when I let down the window and suddenly disclosed myself, are still present to me—In four days' time, I now (2d December 1866) hope to see this brave *Jean* again (now "Mrs. Aitken," from Dumfries, and a hardy, hearty Wife and Mother), Jenny, poor little thing, has had her crosses and difficulties, but has managed them well, and now lives, contented enough and industrious as ever, with Husband and three or two daughters, in Hamilton, Canada West,—not far from which are my Brother Alick too, and others dear to me Double, double, toil and trouble,—such, with result or without it, are our wanderings in this world<sup>1</sup>—

My poor little establishment at Hoddam Hill (close by the "Tower of *Repentance*,"<sup>1</sup> as if symbolically!) I do not mean to speak of here A neat compact little Farm, rent £100, which my Father had leased for me, on which was a prettyish-looking Cottage for dwelling-house (had been the Factor's place, who was retiring),—and from the windows, such a "view" (fifty miles in radius, from beyond Tyndale

<sup>1</sup> A square Tower, near Hoddam Castle which was once the property of the Lords Herries, above the door of it are carved a Serpent and a Dove (emblems of remorse and grace), and between them the word Repentance Scott gives a note respecting the vague traditions connected with this Tower See "The Complaint of the Lord Herries," *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (four vol edition, Edinburgh, 1869), iv 307



to beyond St. Bees, Solway Frith and all the Fells to Ingleborough inclusive) as Britain or the world could hardly have matched<sup>1</sup> Here the ploughing etc. was already in progress (which I often rode across to see), and, here at term-day (26th May 1825) I established myself, set up my Books and bits of implements and *Lanes*, and took to doing *German Romance* as my daily work, "ten pages daily" my stint, which, barring some rare accident, I faithfully accomplished. Brother Alick was my practical *farmer*, ever-kind and beloved Mother, with one of the little girls, was generally there,—Brother John, too, oftenest, who had just taken his degree,—these, with a little man and ditto maid, were our establishment. It lasted only one year, owing, I believe, to indistinctness of bargain, first of all, and then to arbitrary high-handed temper of our Landlord (used to a rather prostrate style of obedience, and not finding it here, but a polite appeal to fair-play instead), our whole summer and autumn were defaced by a great deal of paltry bother on that head, superadded to the others, and at last, Lease of Mainhill, too, being nearly out, it was decided to quit said Landlord's territories altogether, and so end his controversies with us Next 26th of May, we went, all of us, to Scotsbrig<sup>1</sup> (a much better farm, which was now bidden for, and got), and where, as turned out, I continued only a few months—wedded, and to Edinburgh in October following Ah me, what a *retrospect* now!

With all its manifold petty troubles, this year at Hoddam Hill has a rustic beauty and dignity to me,

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, vol. i. p.

and lies now like a not ignoble russet-coated Idyll in my memory, one of the quietest on the whole, and perhaps the most triumphantly important of my life. I lived very silent, diligent, had long solitary rides (on my wild Irish horse "Larry," good for the *dictetic* part),—my meditations, musings and reflections were continual, thoughts went wandering (or travelling) through Eternity, through Time, and through Space, so far as poor I had scanned or known,—and were now, to my endless solacement, coming back with *tidings* to me! This year I found that I had conquered all my scepticisms, agonising doubtings, fearful wrestlings with the foul and vile and soul-murdering Mud-gods of my Epoch, had escaped, as from a worse than Tartarus, with all its Phlegethons and Stygian quagmires, and was emerging, free in spirit, into the eternal blue of ether,—where, blessed be Heaven, I have, for the spiritual part, ever since lived, looking down upon the welterings of my poor fellow-creatures, in such multitudes and millions, still stuck in that fatal element, and have had no concern whatever in their Puseyisms, Ritualisms, Metaphysical controversies and cobwebberies, and no feeling of my own, except honest silent pity for the serious or religious part of them, and occasional indignation, for the poor world's sake, at the frivolous, *secular* and impious part, with their Universal Suffrages, their Nigger Emancipations, Sluggard-and-Scoundrel Protection Societies, and "Unexampled Prosperities," for the time being!—What my pious joy and gratitude then was, let the pious soul figure. In a fine and veritable sense, I, poor, obscure, without outlook, almost without

worldly hope, had become independent of the world,—what was death itself, from the world, to what I had come through? I understood well what the old Christian people meant by their “Conversion,” by God’s Infinite Mercy to them—I had, in effect, gained an immense victory, and, for a number of years, had, in spite of nerves and chagrins, a constant inward happiness that was quite royal and supreme, in which all temporal evil was transient and insignificant, and which essentially remains with me still, though far oftener *eclipsed*, and lying deeper *down*, than then. Once more, thank Heaven for its highest gift. I then felt, and still feel, endlessly indebted to *Goethe* in the business, he, in his fashion, I perceived, had travelled the steep rocky road before me,—the first of the moderns. Bodily health itself seemed improving, bodily health was all I had really lost, in this grand spiritual battle now gained, and that too, I may have hoped, would gradually return altogether,—which it never did, and was far enough from doing! Meanwhile my thoughts were very peaceable, full of pity and humanity as they had never been before. Nowhere can I recollect of myself such pious musings, communings, silent and spontaneous, with Fact and Nature, as in these poor Annandale localities. The sound of the Kirk-bell, once or twice on Sunday mornings (from Hoddam Kirk, about a mile off on the plain below me), was strangely touching,—like the departing voice of eighteen hundred years. Frank Dixon, at rare intervals, called in passing. Nay once, for about ten days, my Dearest and Beautifullest herself came across, out of Nithsdale, to “pay my Mother

a visit,"—where she gained all hearts, and we mounted our swift little horses and careered about! No wonder I call that year *idyllic*, in spite of its russet coat. My Darling and I were at The Grange (Mrs Johnston's), at Annan (Mrs Dickson's), and we rode together to Dumfries, where her Aunts and Grandmother were, whom she was to pause with, on this her road home to Templand. How beautiful, how sad and strange all that now looks! Her beautiful little heart was evidently much cast-down, right sorry to part, though we hoped it was but for some short while. I remember the Heights of Mouswald, with Dumfries, and the granite Mountains lying in panorama seven or eight miles off to our left; and what she artlessly yet finely said to me there. Oh, my Darling, not Andromache dressed in all the art of a Racine looks more high and queenly to me, or is more of a *tragic poem*, than Thou and thy noble Pilgrimage beside me, in this poor thorny muddy world!—

I had next to no direct correspondence with Irving, a little Note or so on business, nothing more. Nor was Mrs Montagu much more instructive on that head, who wrote me high-sounding amiable things, which I could not but respond to, more or less, though dimly aware of their quality nor did the sincere and ardent Mrs Strachey, who wrote seldom, almost ever touch upon Irving. But by some occasional unmelodious *clang* in all the Newspapers (twice over I think in this year), we could sufficiently, and with little satisfaction, construe his way of life. Twice over he had leaped the barriers, and given rise to criticism,—of the customary

idle sort, loudish universally, and nowhere accurately just. Case first was of Preaching to the London Missionary Society ("Missionary" I will call it, though it might be "Bible" or another) on their grand Anniversary these people had appointed him the honour of addressing them, and were numerously assembled,—expecting some flourishes of eloquence, and flatteries to their illustrious divinely-blessed Society, ingeniously done, and especially with fit *brevity*, dinner itself waiting, I suppose, close in the rear. Irving emerged into his Speaking Place at the due moment but, instead of treating men and office-bearers to a short comfortable dose of honey and butter, opened into strict sharp inquiries, Rhadamanthine expositions of duty and ideal, issuing perhaps in actual criticism and admonition, gall and vinegar instead of honey,—at any rate, keeping the poor people locked up there for "above two hours," instead of one hour, or less, with dinner *hot* at the end of it! This was much criticised, "plainly wrong, and produced by love of singularity and too much pride in oneself!" voted every body. For in fact a man suddenly holding up the naked inexorable Ideal in face of the clothed (and in England generally plump, comfortable and pot-bellied) Reality, is doing an unexpected and a questionable thing!

The next escapade was still worse. At some public meeting of probably the same "Missionary Society," Irving again held up his Ideal,—I think, not without murmurs from former sufferers by it,—and ended by solemnly putting down, not his name to the Subscription-List, but an actual Gold Watch, which he said had just arrived to him from his be-

loved Brother lately dead in India (This Brother was John, the eldest of the three, an Indian Army-Surgeon, whom I remember once meeting on a "common stair" in Edinburgh, on return I suppose from some call on a comrade higher up, a taller man than even Edward, and with a blooming, placid, not very intelligent face, and no squint; whom I easily recognised by family-likeness, but never saw again or before) That of the Gold Watch tabled had in reality a touch of rash ostentation, and was bitterly crowed over by the able editors for a time. On the whole, one could gather too clearly that Irving's course was beset with pitfalls, barking dogs, and dangers and difficulties unwarned-of, and that, for one who took so little counsel with prudence, he perhaps carried his head too high. I had a certain harsh kind of sorrow about poor Irving, and my loss of him (and his loss of *me*, on such poor terms as these seemed to be!)—but I carelessly trusted in his strength against whatever mistakes and impediments, and felt that for the present it was better to be absolved from corresponding with him.

That same year, late in Autumn, he was at Annan, only for a night and a day,—returning from some farther journey, perhaps to Glasgow or Edinburgh, and had to go on again for London next day. I rode down from Hoddam Hill before night-fall, found him sitting in the snug little Parlour beside his Father and Mother, beautifully domestic, —I think it was the last time I ever saw those good old people. We sat only a few minutes, my thoughts sadly contrasting the beautiful affectionate safety here, and the wild tempestuous hostilities and perils

yonder He left his blessing to each, by name, in a low soft voice there was something almost tragical to me, as he turned round (hitting his hat on the little door-lintel) and, next moment, was on the dark street, followed only by me. We stepped over to Robert Dickson's, his Brother-in-law's, and sat there, still talking, for perhaps an hour. Probably, his plan of journey was, to catch the Glasgow-London Mail at Gretna, and to *walk* thither, the night being dry, and time at discretion. Walk, I remember, he did, and talk in the interim, three or at most four of us now. He looked sad and serious, not in the least downhearted,—told us (probably in answer to some question of mine) that the Projected "London University" (now of Gover Street) seemed to be progressing towards fulfilment, and how, at some meeting, Poet Campbell arguing loudly for a purely *Secular* System, had, on sight of Irving entering, at once stopt short, and, in the politest way he could, sat down without another word on the subject. "It will be *un*religious, secretly anti-religious, all the same," said Irving to us. Whether he reported of the Projected *Athenæum Club* (dear to Basil Montagu, among others), I don't recollect, probably not, as he or I had little interest in that. When the time had come for setting out, and we were all on foot, he called for his three little Nieces, having their Mother by him, had them each successively set standing on a chair, laid his hand on the head first of one, with a "Mary Dickson, the Lord bless you!" then of the next by name, and of the next, "The Lord bless you!"—in a sad and solemn tone (with something of elaboration noticeable in it, too), which

was painful and dreary to me. A dreary visit altogether, though an unabatedly affectionate on both sides. In what a contrast, thought I, to the old sunshiny visits, when Glasgow was headquarters, and everybody was obscure, frank to his feelings, and safe! Mrs Dickson, I think, had tears in her eyes; her, too, he doubtless blessed, but without hand on head. Dickson and the rest of us escorted him a little way, would then take leave in the common form,—but even that latter circumstance I do not perfectly recal, only the fact of our escorting, and, before the visit and after it, all is now fallen dark.

Irving did not re-emerge for many months, and found me then in very greatly changed circumstances: his next visit was to *us*, at Comley Bank, Edinburgh, not to *me* any longer! It was probably in Spring, 1827, a visit of only half an hour, more resembling a “call” from neighbour on neighbour. I think it was connected with Scripture-Prophecy work, in which he was now deep: at any rate, he was now preaching and communing on something or other, to numbers of people in Edinburgh, and we had heard of him for perhaps a week before as shinningly busy in that way, when, in some interval, he made this little run over to Comley Bank and us. He was very friendly, but had a look of trouble, of haste, and confused controversy and anxiety, sadly unlike his old good self. In dialect too and manner, things had not bettered themselves, but the contrary: he talked with an undeniable self-consciousness, and something which you could not but admit to be religious mannerism,—never quite recovered out of that, in spite



the centre of it, over the fields. I remember an excellent little Portraiture of *Methodism*, from him on a green knoll where we had loosely sat down. "Not a good religion Sir," said he, confidentially, shaking his head, in answer to my question, "far too little of spiritual conscience, far too much of temporal appetite. Goes hunting and watching after its own emotions, that is, mainly, its own *self-interest*, an essentially sensuous religion, depending on the body, not on the soul!" "Fit only for a gross and vulgar-minded people," I perhaps added, "a religion so-called and the essence of it principally *conscience* and *utility*, terror of pain, and appetite for pleasure both carried to the infinite?" To which he would sorrowfully assent, in a considerable degree. My Brother John, lately come home from Germany, said to me next day "That was a pretty little *Schiller* & (Portraiture) he threw off for us, that of the Methodists, wasn't it?"

At Dun-core in the evening, there was Sermon, and abundant rustic concourse, not in the Kirk, but round it in the Kirkyard for convenience of room. I attended with most of our people (one of us not busy she at home 'field-marshal'ling, the noble little soul!)—I remember nothing of sermon or subject except that it went along flowingly, like true discourse direct from the inner reservoirs and that everybody seemed to listen with respectful satisfaction. We rode pleasantly home in the dusk and soon afterwards would retire, Irving having to 'catch the Glasgow Coach' early next day. Next day, correct to time he and I were on horseback soon after breakfast and rode leisurely along towards

Auldgarth Bridge, some ten miles from us, where the Coach was to pass Irving's talk, or what of it I remember, turned chiefly, and in a cheerful tone, upon Touring to the Continent, a beautiful six weeks of *rest*, which he was to have in that form (and I to be taken with him, as *diagonian*, were it nothing more!)—which I did not at the time believe in, and which was far enough from ever coming. On nearing the goal, he became a little anxious about his Coach but we were there in perfect time, “still fifteen minutes to spare,”—and stepped into the Inn to wait, over a real or (on my part) theoretic glass of ale. Irving was still but midway in his glass, when the Coach, sooner than expected, was announced “Does not *change* here, changes at Thornhill!”—so that there was not a moment to be lost. Irving sprang hastily to the Coach-roof (no other seat left), and was at once bowled away, waving me his kind farewell, and vanishing among the woods. This was probably the last time I ever had Irving as my guest,—nay as guest for nights, or even a night, it was probably the first time. In Scotland I never saw him again. Our next meeting was in London, autumn of the year 1831.

By that time, there had been changes both with him and me, with him a sad-enough change,—namely, *deposition* from the Scottish Established Kirk, which he felt to be a sore blow, though to me it seemed but the whiff of a *telum imbelle* for such a man. What the particulars of his heresy were, I never knew or have totally forgotten. Some doctrine he held about the Human Nature of the Divine Man, that Christ's human nature was liable to sin like our

own, and continually tempted thereto, while, by his divine nobleness he kept it continually perfect, and pure from sin,—this doctrine, which as an impartial bystander, I, from Irving's point of view and from my own, entirely assented to, Irving had, by voice and pen, been publishing, and I remember hearing vaguely of its being much canvassed, up and down,—always with impatience and a boundless contempt when I did hear of it—("The *Gig* of Respectability again!" I would say or think to myself "They consider it more honourable to their Supreme of the World to have had his work done for him than to have done it himself *Flunkys* irredeemable, carrying their *plush* into Highest Heaven!")—this I do remember, but whether this was the damning heresy of Irving, this or some other, I do not now know. Indeed my own grief on the matter, and it had become a chronic, dull and perennial grief, was, That such a soul had anything to do with "heresies," and mean puddles of that helpless sort, and was not rather working in his proper sphere, infinite spaces above all that! Deposed he certainly was, the fact is still recorded in my memory and by a kind of accident I have the approximate *date* of it too,—Allan Cunningham having had a Public Dinner given him in Dumfries, at which I, with great effort, attended, and Allan's first talk to me, on meeting, having been about Irving's late troubles, and about my own soon coming to London with a MS Book in my pocket, with *Sartor Resartus*, namely! The whole of which circumstances have, naturally, imprinted themselves on me, while so much else has faded out.

The first genesis of *Sartor* I remember well



while we drove together, "as ever *as* little skin covered") —this was all my team. Soon after leaving the Highway,—or perhaps it was almost before, for I was well wrapt up, warm enough, contented to be out of my affair, wearied too with so much noise and sipping of wine,—I too, like the world, had fallen sound asleep. Must have sat, in deep perfect sleep (probably with the reins hung over the whip and its case), for about ten miles! There were ascents, descents steep enough, dangerous fenceless parts, narrow bridges with little parapet (especially one, called "Rowting," i.e. bellowing or roaring "Brig," spanning a grand loud cataract, in quite an intricate way, for there was abrupt turn, just at the end of it, with rapid descent, and *wrong* road to be avoided), "Rowting Brig," "Milltown Brig" (also with intricacy of wrong roads) —not very long after which latter, in the bottom of Glenessland, roads a little rumibly there, owing to recent inundation, I awoke, safe as if Jehu had been driving me, and within four miles of home. Considerably astonished, but nothing like so grateful as I now am, on looking back on the affair, and my brave little mare's performance in it. Ah me, in this Creation, rough and honest, though not made for our sake only, how many things, lifeless and living,—living *persons*, some of them, and *their* life beautiful as azure and heaven,—beneficently help us forward, while we journey together, and have not yet bidden sorrowful farewell! My little Darling sat waiting for me, in the depths of the desert, and, better or worse, the Dumfries Dinner was over. This must have been in July<sup>1</sup> 1831

<sup>1</sup> It was on the 22d July

Thirteen months before there had fallen on me, and on us all, a very great, most tender, painful and solemn grief—the death of my eldest Sister, Margaret, who, after sore struggles, had quitted us, in the flower of her youth, age about twenty-seven. She was the charm of her old Father's life, deeply respected as well as loved by her Mother and all of us, by none more than me, and was, in fact, in the simple, modest, comely and rustic form, as intelligent, quietly valiant, quietly wise and heroic a young woman as I have almost ever seen—very dear and estimable to my Jeannie, too, who had zealously striven to help her, and now mourned for her along with me. “The shortest night of 1830,” that was her last in this world. The year before, for many months, she had suffered nameless miseries, with a stoicism all her own, Doctors, unable to help, saw her with astonishment rally and apparently recover,—“by her own force of character alone!” said one of them. Never shall I forget that bright Summer Evening (late Summer, 1829), when, contemplatively lounging with my pipe outside the window, I heard unexpectedly the sound of horses' feet, and, up our little “Avenue,” pacing under the trees, overhung by the yellow sunlight, appeared my Brother John and she, unexpectedly from Scotsbrig, bright to look upon, cheery of face, and the welcomest interruption to our solitude. “dear Mag, dear Mag, once more!” Nay John had brought me, from Dumfries Post-Office, a long Letter from Goethe,<sup>1</sup> one of the finest I ever had from him, (Son's death perhaps men-

<sup>1</sup> For this letter, see *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle* (Macmillan and Co., 1887), p. 127

tioned in it?)—Letter all so white, so *pure* externally and internally, so high and heroic,—this, too, seemed bright to me, as the summer sunset, in which I stood reading it. Seldom was a cheerfuller evening at Craigenputtock. Margaret staid perhaps a fortnight, quietly cheerful all the time but was judged (by a very quick *Eye* in such things) to be still far from well. She sickened again in March or April next, on some cold or accident, grew worse than ever, herself now falling nearly hopeless (“Cannot stand a second bout like last year’s!” she once whispered to one of her sisters) we had brought her to Dumfries, in the hope of better medical help, which was utterly vain, Mother and Sister Mary waited on her, with trembling anxiety, I often there, few days before the end, my Jeannie (in the dusk of such a day of gloomy hurlyburly to us all!) carried her on her knees, in a *sedan*, to some new or suburban garden-lodging we had got (but did not *then* tell me what the dying one had said to her) In fine, towards midnight, June 21-22, I alone still up, an express from Dumfries rapped on my window “Grown worse, you and your Brother wanted yonder!” Alick and I were soon on horseback, rode diligently through the slumbering woods (ever memorable to me, that night, and its phenomena of woods and sky),—found all finished, hours ago, only a weeping Mother and Sister left, with whom neither of us could help weeping. Poor Alick’s face, when I met him at the door with such news (for he had staid behind me, getting rid of the horses), the mute struggle, mute and vain, as of the rugged rock *not* to dissolve itself,—is still visible to me. Why do I evoke these

bitter sorrows and miseries, which have mercifully long lain as if asleep? I will not farther that day, 22d June 1830, full of sacred sorrow and of paltry botheration of business (for we had, after some hours and a little consultation, sent Mary and my Mother home), is to be counted among the painfullest of my life,—and in the evening, having at last reached the silence of the woods, I remember fairly lifting up my voice and weeping aloud, a long time—

[Half of another *written sheet* goes with me to Mentone, to try whether it (it, and something better, might I hope?) cannot be finished there—Chelsea, Wednesday, 19 Dec 1866]

All this has nothing to do with Irving, little even with the journey I was now making towards him,—except that in the tumultuous agitations of the latter, it came all, in poignant clearness and completeness, into my mind again, and continued with me, in the background or the foreground, during most of the time I was in London. From Whitehaven onwards to Liverpool, amid the noise and jostle of a crowd of high-dressed vulgar-looking people who joined us there, and with their “hot brandies,” dice-boxes, etc, down below, and the blaring of brass bands, and idle babblers and worshippers of the nocturnal picturesque, made deck and cabin almost equally a delirium,—this, all this of fourteen months ago, in my poor head and heart, was the one thing awake, and the saturnalia round it a kind of mad nightmare *dream*. At London, too, perhaps a week or so after my arrival, somebody had given me a ticket to see Macready, and, stepping out of the evening sun, I found myself in Drury Lane Theatre,—which was



all darkened, carefully lamp-lit, play just beginning or going to begin out of my gratis box (front box on the lower tier), I sat gazing into that painted scene and its mimings, but heard nothing, saw nothing,—*her* green grave, and Ecclefechan silent little Kirkyard far away, and how the evening sun at this same moment would be shining *there*, generally that was the main thing I saw or thought of; and tragical enough that was, without any Macready! Of Macready, that time, I remember nothing, and suppose I must have come soon away

Irving was now living in Judd-Street, New Road, a bigger, much better old House than the former new one, and much handier for the new "Caledonian Chapel," which stood, spacious and grand, in Regent Square, and was quite dissevered from Hatton-Garden and its concerns. I stepped over to him, on the evening of my arrival, found him sitting quiet and alone, brotherly as ever in his reception of me.

[27th December 1866 Ceased at London, perhaps three weeks ago, mere hubbub and uncertainty intervening, *begins* again at Mentone on the *Riviera Occidentale*, whither I have been pushed and pulled in the most unheard-of way, Professor Tyndall, Lady Ashburton, friends, foes all conspiring, a journey like "*chaos* come again," and an arrival and continuance hitherto still *like* ditto (wakeful nights each, especially the one just gone) —in which strange circumstances, bright sun shining, blue sea faintly murmuring, orange groves glowing out of window, Mentone hidden, and Ventimiglia Cape in view, all

earth a kind of Paradise, inhabitant a kind of quasi-Satan,—I endeavour to proceed the best I can ]

Our talk was good and edifying he was by this time deep in Prophecy and other aberrations, surrounded by weak people, mostly echoes of himself and his incredible notions but he was willing to hear me, too, on secularities, candid like a second-self in judging of what one said in the way of opinion, and wise and even shrewd in regard to anything of business if you consulted him on that side. He objected clearly to my Reform-Bill notions, found *Democracy* a thing forbidden, leading down to outer darkness, I, a thing inevitable, and *obliged* to lead whithersoever it could. We had several colloquies on that subject, on which, though my own poor convictions are widened, not altered, I should now have more sympathy with his than was then the case. We also talked on Religion and Christianity "Evidences,"—our notions, of course, more divergent than ever. "It is sacred, my friend, we can call it sacred such a *Civitas Dei* as was never built before, wholly the grandest series of work ever hitherto done by the Human Soul,—the Highest God (doubt it not) assenting and inspiring all along!" This I remember once saying plainly, which was not an encouragement to prosecute the topic. We were in fact, hopelessly divided, to what tragical extent both of us might well feel! But something still remained, and this we (*he* at least, for I think in friendship he was the nobler of the two) were only the more anxious to retain and make good. I recollect breakfasting with him and the like, a strange set of ignorant conceited

fanatics forming the body of the party, and greatly spoiling it for me. Irving's own kindness was evidently in essence unabated, how sorrowful, at once provoking and pathetic, that I or he could henceforth get so little good of it!—

We were to have gone and seen Coleridge together, had fixed a day for that object, but the day proved one long deluge, no stirring out possible, and we did not appoint another. I never saw Coleridge more, he died the year after our final removal to London<sup>1</sup> a man much pitied and recognised by me, never excessively esteemed in any respect, and latterly, on the intellectual or spiritual side, less and less. The Father of Puseyism and of much vain Phantasmal Moonshine, which still vexes this poor earth,—as I have elsewhere described him. Irving and I did not, on the whole, see much of one another during this *Santor Resartus* visit, our circles, our courses and employments were so altogether diverse. Early in the visit, he walked me to Belgrave Square to dine with Henry Drummond, beautiful promenade through the crowd and stir of Piccadilly which was then somewhat of a novelty to me. Irving, I heard afterwards, was judged, from the broad hat, brown skin and flowing black hair to be in all probability the One-string Fiddler Paganini, a tall, lean taciturn abstruse-looking figure, who was then, after his sort, astonishing the idle of mankind. Henry Drummond, house all in summer *déshabille*, carpets up, etc., received us with abundance of respect, and of aristocratic poco-

<sup>1</sup> This is a mistake. Coleridge died 25th July 1834. See *supra*, p. 132 n.

curantism withal (the latter perhaps rather in a *conscious* condition), gave us plenty of talk, and received well what was given (chiefly on the rotten social state of England, on the "Swing" outrages, "half the year in raising wheat, t'other half in burning it," which were then alarming everybody), all rather in epigrammatic exaggerative style, and with wisdom sometimes sacrificed to "wit",—gave us, in short, a pleasant enough dinner and evening but left me, as Mazzini used to describe it, "cold" A man of elastic pungent decisive nature, full of fine qualities and capabilities,—but well nigh cracked by an enormous conceit of himself, which, both as pride and vanity (in strange partnership, mutually agreeable), seemed to pervade every fibre of him, and render his life a restless inconsistency that was the feeling he left in me, nor did it alter afterwards, when I saw a great deal more of him,—without sensible increase or diminution of the little love he at first inspired in me. Poor Henry, he shot fiery arrows about, too, but they told nowhere. I was never tempted to become more intimate with him, though he now and then seemed willing enough *Ex nihilo nihil fit* He, without unkindness of intention, did my poor Irving a great deal of ill, me never any, such my better luck His last act was, (about eight or nine years ago), to ask us both<sup>1</sup> out to Albury on a mistaken day (when he himself was not there)! Happily my Darling had, at the eleventh hour, decided not to go, so that the ugly confusion fell all on me—and in few months more, Henry was himself dead, and no mistake possible again

<sup>1</sup> Mr and Mrs Carlyle

Albury, the ancient Earl of Arundel's, the recent Prophet-Conference's etc., I had seen for the first, and most likely for the last time. <sup>1</sup>

My business lay with the Bookseller or Publishing world, my chief intercourse was with the lighter Literary Figures, in part, too, with the Political, many of whom I transiently saw at Jeffrey's (who was then Lord Advocate) and all of whom I might hear of through him not in either kind was my appetite very keen, nor did it increase by what it fed on,—rather a "feast of *shells*," as perhaps I then defined it people of biggish names, but of substance mainly spilt and wanting All men were full of the *Reform Bill*, nothing else talked of, written of, the air loaded with *it* alone,—which occasioned great obstruction in the publishing of my *Sartor*, I was told On that latter point I could say much, but will forbear Few men ever more surprised me than did the great Albemarle-Street Murray, who had published for Byron and all the great ones for many years, and to whom Jeffrey sent me recommended Stupider man than the great Murray, in look, in speech, in conduct in regard to this poor *Sartor* question, I imagined I had seldom or never seen! Afterwards it became apparent to me that partly he was sinking into heaviness of old age, and partly (still more important) that, in regard to this particular *Sartor* question, his position was an impossible one, position of a poor old man endeavouring to answer "Yes and

<sup>1</sup> A footnote referring to Mr Thomas Carlyle, *Idem*, printed in the first edition, are omitted here, as there are good grounds for believing that Carlyle had been misinformed as to this namesake of his.

No!" I had striven and pushed, for some weeks, with him and others, on those impossible principles, till at length discovering,—I, with brevity, demanded back my poor *Manuscript* from Murray, received it with some apologetic palaver (enclosing an opinion from his *Taster*, which was subsequently printed in one edition), and much hope, etc etc, locked it away into fixity of silence for the present (my *Murray* into ditto for ever),—and decided to send for the Dear One I had left behind me, and let her too see London which I knew she would like, before we went farther. Ah me, this sunny *Riviera*, which we sometimes vaguely thought of, she does not see along with me and my thoughts of her here are too sad for words. I will write no more to-day. Oh my Darling, my lost Darling, may the Great God be good to thee. Silence, though,—and "Hope" if I can!—

My Jeannie came about the end of September. Brother John, by industry of hers and mine (*hers* chiefly), acting on an opportunity of Lord Advocate Jeffrey's, had got an appointment for Italy<sup>1</sup> ("Traveling Physician," by which he has since made abundance of money, and of work may be said to have translated Dante's *Inferno*, were there nothing more!)—We shifted from an uncomfortable Lodging (at Irving's youngest Brother George's, an incipient Surgeon, amiable, and clever superficially, who soon after died) into a clean quiet and modestly comfortable

<sup>1</sup> Dr J. A. Carlyle held this appointment for a number of years. His amiable and kindly disposition made him a favourite with his patient, the Countess of Clare, with whom he remained on intimate terms of friendship as long as she lived.

one, in Ampton Street (same St. Pancras region), and there, ourselves two, Brother John being *off* to Italy, set up for the winter, under tolerable omens My Darling was, as ever, the guardian spirit of the establishment, and made all things bright and smooth The Daughter of the house, a fine young Cockney specimen, fell quite in love with her, served like a fairy, was, next year long after we were gone, for coming to us at Craigenputtock to be "maid of all work" (an impossible suggestion!)—and did, in effect, keep up an adoring kind of intercourse till the fatal day of April last, never changing at all in *her* poor tribute of love A fine outpouring of her grief and admiring gratitude, written after that event, (letter to me, signed "Eliza Snowden,"—*Miles* was her maiden name. "Snowden," once a clerk with her uncle, is, now himself, for long years back, a prosperous Upholsterer, and the Sylph-like Eliza, grown fat enough of shape, is the mother of six or seven prosperous children to him), was *not* thrown into the fire, half-read or unread, but is still lying in a drawer at Chelsea, or perhaps adjoined to some of the things I was writing there, as a genuine human utterance, not without some sad value to me My poor little Woman had often indifferent health, which seemed rather to worsen than improve while we continued, but her spirit was indefatigable, ever cheery, full of grace, ingenuity, dexterity, and she much enjoyed London, and the considerable miscellany of people that came about us Charles Buller, John Mill, several professed "admirers" of mine (among whom was, and for aught I know still is, the mocking Hayward!), Jeffrey almost daily as

an admirer of *hers* ; not to mention Mrs Montagu and Co, certain Holcrofts (Badams married to one of them, a certain Kenny married to the mother of them,—at whose house, I once saw Godwin, if that were anything), Allan Cunningham from time to time, and fluctuating Foreigners etc, etc,—we had company rather in superabundance than otherwise, and a pair of the clearest eyes in the whole world were there to take note of them all, a judgment to compare and contrast them (as I afterwards found she had been doing, the dear soul) with what was already all her own Ah me, ah me!

Soon after New-Year's Day, a great sorrow came unexpected news of my Father's death He had been in bed, as ill, only a few hours, when the last hour proved to be there, unexpectedly to all, except perhaps to himself, for, ever since my Sister Margaret's death, he had been fast failing, though none of us took notice enough, such had been his perfection of health, almost all along through the seventy-three years he lived I sat plunged into the depths of natural grief, the pale kingdoms of eternity laid bare to me, and all that was sad and grand, and dark as death, filling my thoughts exclusively, day after day How beautiful *She* was to me, how kind and tender! Till after the Funeral, my Father's noble old face, one of the finest and strongest I have ever seen, was continually before my eyes—in these and the following days and nights I hastily wrote down some memorials of him,<sup>1</sup> which I have never since seen, but which still exist somewhere, though indeed they were not worth preserving, still less *etc*,

<sup>1</sup> See Paper, "James Carlyle," *supra*, vol. 1



after *I* have done with them "Posterity," that is what I never thought of appealing to, what possible use can there be in appealing *there*,—in, *appealing* anywhere, except by absolute silence to the High Court of Eternity, which *can* do no error? Poor sickly Transiencies that we are, coveting we know not what!—In the February ensuing I wrote *Johnson* (the *Bozzy* part was published in *Fraser* for April), a week or two before, we had made acquaintance, by Hunt's own goodness, with Leigh Hunt, and were much struck with him,—early in April, we got back to Annandale and Craigenputtock (sadly present to my soul, most sadly yet most beautifully, all that, even now!)—

In the course of the winter, sad things had occurred in Irving's history His enthusiastic studies and preachings were passing into the practically "miraculous," and to me the most doleful of all phenomena, the "Gift of Tongues" had fairly broken out among the crazed weakest of his wholly rather dim and weakly flock I was never at all in his church, during this visit, being grieved at once and angered at the course he had got into but once or twice, poor Eliza Miles came running home from some evening sermon there was, all in a tremor of tears over these same "Tongues," and a riot from the *dissenting* majority opposing them "All a tumult yonder, oh me!" This did not happen above twice or so, Irving (never himself a "Tongue" performer) having taken some order with the thing, and I think discouraged and nearly suppressed it as *unfit* during Church service. It was greatly talked of, by certain persons with an enquiry, "Do you believe in it?"

"Believe in it? As much as I do in the High Priest of Otaheite!" answered Lockhart once, to Fraser, the inquiring Bookseller, in my hearing. Sorrow and disgust were naturally my own feeling. "How are the mighty fallen, my once high Irving come to this, by paltry popularities, and Cockney admirations, puddling such a head!" We ourselves saw less and less of Irving, but one night, in one of our walks, we did make a call, and actually heard what they called the Tongues. It was in a neighbouring room, larger part of the drawing room belike. Mrs Irving had retired thither with the devotees, Irving for our sake had staid, and was pacing about the floor, dandling his youngest child, and talking to us of this and that, probably about the Tongues withal,—when there burst forth a shrilly hysterical "Lall-lall-lall!" (little or nothing else but *l's* and *a's* continued for several minutes), to which Irving, with singular calmness, said only, "There, hear you, there are the Tongues!" and we two, except by our looks which probably were eloquent, answered him nothing, but soon came away, full of distress, provocation and a kind of shame. "Why wasn't there a bucket of cold water to fling on that *lall-lalling* hysterical mad-woman?" thought we, or said, to one another. "Oh Heavens, that it should come to this!"—I do not remember any call we made there afterwards, of course there was a Farewell call, but that too I recollect only obliquely. Seldom was seen a more tragical scene to us, than this of Irving's London life was now becoming!

One other time we did see Irving at our Lodging, where he had called to take leave of us, a day

or two before our quitting London I know not whether the interview had been preconcerted between my Darling and me for the sake of our common Friend, but it was abundantly serious, and affecting to us all, and none of the Three, I believe, ever forgot it again. Preconcerting or not, I had privately determined that I must tell Irving plainly what I thought of his present course and posture, and I now did so, breaking in by the first opportunity, and leading the Dialogue wholly into that channel, till with all the delicacy but also with all the fidelity possible to me, I put him fully in possession of what my real opinion was. *She*, my noble Jeannie, said hardly anything, but her looks and here and there a word testified how deep her interest was, how complete her assent. I stated plainly to him that he must permit me a few words for relief of my conscience, before leaving him for we knew not what length of time, on a course which I could not but regard as full of danger to him. That the "*13th of the Corinthians*," to which he always appealed, was surely too narrow a basis for so high a tower as he was building on it,—a high lean tower, or quasi-mast, piece added to piece, till it soared far above all human science and experience, and flatly contradicted all that,—founded solely on a little text of *writing* in an ancient Book! No sound judgment, on such warranty, could venture on such an enterprise. Authentic "writings" of the Most High, were they found in old Books only? They were in the stars and on the rocks, and in the brain and heart of every mortal,—*not* dubious there, to any person, as this "*13th of the Corinthians*"

very greatly was. That it did not besbecm him, Edward Irving, to be hanging on the rearward of mankind, struggling still to chain them to old notions not now well to be, but to be foremost in the van leading on by the light of the eternal stars, across this hitherto desirous wilderness where we all were, towards Promised Land that lay ahead. Be- think you, my Friend, I not that *g. n* plainly commanded duty, more plain than any 13th of the Corinthians can be. I bid you pause and consider, that verily is my solemn advice to you!—I added that, as he knew well, it was in the name of old friendship I was saying all this. That I did not expect he would at once, or soon, renounce his fixed views, connections and methods, for any words of mine—but perhaps at some future time of crisis and questioning dubiety in his own mind, he might remember these words of a well-affected soul, and they might then be of help to him.

During all this, which perhaps lasted about twenty minutes, Irving sat opposite me, within a few feet (my Wife to his right hand and to my left, silent and sad-looking) in the middle of the floor, Irving with head downcast, face indicating great pain, but without the slightest word or sound from him, till I had altogether ended. He then began with the mildest low tone, and face full of kindness and composed distress, “Dear friend,”—and endeavoured to make his apology and defence, which did not last long, or do anything to convince me, but was in a style of modesty and friendly magnanimity, which no mortal could surpass, and which remains to me, at this moment, dear and memorable

and worthy of all honour Which done, he went silently his way, no doubt with kindest farewells to us, and I remember nothing more. Possibly we had already made farewell call in Judd-Street, the day before, and found *him* not there?—

This was, in a manner, the last visit I ever made to Irving, the last time either of *us* ever freely saw him, or spoke with him at any length. We had to go our way, he his,—and his soon proved to be precipitous, full of chasms and plunges, which rapidly led him to the close. Our journey homeward—I have spoken of it elsewhere, and of the dear reminiscences it leaves, ever sad, but also ever blessed to me now. We were far away from Irving, in our solitary moors, staid still there above two years (one of our winters in Edinburgh), and heard of Irving and his catastrophes only from the distance. He had to come to Annan and be expelled from the Scottish Kirk.<sup>1</sup> That scene I remember reading in some Newspaper, with lively conception and emotion. A poor aggregate of Reverend *Sticks* in black gown, sitting in Presbytery, to pass formal condemnation on a Man and a Cause which might have been tried in Patmos, under Presidency of St. John, without the right truth of it being got at! I knew the “Moderator” (one Roddick, since gone mad) for one of the stupidest and barrenest of living mortals, also the little phantasm of a creature (Sloan his name, who went niddy-nodding with his head, and was infinitely conceited and phantasmal), by whom Irving was rebuked with the “Remember where you are, Sir!” and got answer, “I have not

<sup>1</sup> Irving was deposed at Annan on the 13th of March 1833

forgotten where I am it is the Church where I was baptized, where I was consecrated to preach Christ, where the bones of my dear ones lie buried!"—Condemnation, under any circumstances, had to follow, "*le droit de me damner te reste toujours*!" as poor Danton said, in a far other case<sup>1</sup>

The feeling of the population was strong and general for Irving, Reverends Sloan and Roddick were not without their apprehensions of some tumult perhaps,—had not the people been so reverent of the place they were in Irving sent us no word of himself, made no appeal to any friend or foe, unless his preaching to the people, up and down, for some days, partly perhaps in the way of defence, though mostly on general gospel subjects, could be taken as such He was followed by great crowds who eagerly heard him My Brother Jamie, who had been at several of those open-air preachings, in different parts of the Annan neighbourhood, and who much admired and pitied the great Irving, gave me the last notice I ever had of that tragic matter, "Irving's vocal *appellatio ad populum*, when Presbytery had condemned him" This time the assemblage was at Ecclefechan, probably the final one of all, and the last time he ever preached to Annandale men The assemblage was large and earnest, gathered in the Middlebie road, a little way off the main Street and Highway The Preacher stood on some table or chair, which was fixed against the trunk of a huge, high, strong and many-branched "Plane-tree" (well known to me and to every one that passes that way), the weather was of proper [March] quality,

<sup>1</sup> See *French Revolution* (Library edition), iii 320

grim, fierce, with windy snow-showers flying, Irving had a woollen comforter about his neck, skirts of comforter, hair, cloak, tossing in the storms, eloquent voice well audible under the groaning of the boughs and piping of the winds. Jamie was on business in the village, and had paused awhile, much moved by what he saw and heard. It was our last of Irving in his native Annandale. Mrs Oliphant, I think, relates that, on getting back to London, he was put under a kind of arrest by certain Angels or Authorities of his New "Irvingite" Church (just established in Newman Street, Oxford Street), for disobeying regulations (perhaps in regard to those volunteer Preachings in Annandale), and sat with great patience, in some penitential place among them, dumb for about a week, till he had expiated that sin. Irving was now become wholly tragical to us, and the least painful we could expect in regard to him was, what mainly happened, that we heard no news from that side at all. His health, we vaguely understood, was becoming uncertain, news naturally worse than none,—had we much believed it which, knowing his old Herculean strength, I suppose we didn't.

In 1834 came our own removal to London,—concerning which are heavy fields of memory, laborious, beautiful, sad and sacred (my darling Lost One!)—were this the place for them, which it isn't. Our winter in Edinburgh—our haggles and distresses (badness of servants mainly), our bits of diligences, strenuous and sometimes happy—in fine the clear resolution that we ought to go. I had been in correspondence with London (chiefly with John Mill, Leigh Hunt,

Mrs. Austin, etc.) ever since our presence there "Let us burn our ships," said my noble One, "and get on march!"—I went as precursor, early in May, ignorantly thinking this was, as in Scotland, the general and sole term for getting Houses in London, and that *after* "May 26th" there would be none but leavings! We were not very *practically* advised, I should think, though there were counsellors many. However I roved lustily about seeking Houses for the next three weeks, while my Darling was still busier at home, getting all things packed, and put under way what endless toil for her, undertaken with what courage, skill and cheery heroism! By the time of her arrival I had been far and wide round London, seeking Houses, had found out that the Western Suburb was, in important respects, the fittest, and had seen nothing I thought so eligible there as a certain *one* of three cheap Houses, which one she, on survey, agreed to be the best,—and which is, in fact, No 5 Great Cheyne Row, where the rest of our life was to be passed together. Why do I write all this? it is too sad to me to think of it, broken-down and solitary as I am, and the lamp of my life, which "covered everything with gold" as it were, gone out, gone out!—

It was on one of those expeditions, a week or more after my arrival, expedition to take survey of the proposed No 5, in company with Mrs Austin, whom I had taken up in Bayswater where she lived, and with whom, attended also by Mrs Jameson, not known to me before, but found by accident on a call there,—we were proceeding towards Chelsea in the middle of a bright May day, when I noticed, well



down in Kensington-Gardens, a dark male figure sitting between two white female ones under a tree, male figure, which abruptly rose and stalked towards me, whom, seeing it was Irving, I hastily disengaged myself, and stepped out to meet. It was indeed Irving, but how changed in the two years and two months since I had last seen him! In look he was almost friendlier than ever, but he had suddenly become an old man. His head, which I had left raven-black, was grown grey, on the temples almost snow-white, the face was hollow, wrinkly, collapsed, the figure, still perfectly erect, seemed to have lost all its elasticity and strength. We walked some space slowly together, my heart smitten with various emotions, my speech, however, striving to be cheery and hopeful. He was very kind and loving, it seemed to be a kind of tender grief and regret that my Jeannie and I were taking so important a step, and he not called at all to assist, rendered unable to assist. Certainly in all England was no heart, and in all Scotland only two or three, that wished us half as well. He admitted his weak health, but treated it as temporary, it seemed of small account to him. Friends and doctors had advised him to Bayswater for better air, had got him a lodging there, a stout horse to ride, summer, they expected, would soon set him up again. His tone was not despondent, but it was low, pensive, full of silent sorrow. Once, perhaps twice, I got a small bit of Annandale laugh from him, strangely genuine, though so lamed and overclouded, this was to me the most affecting thing of all, and still is when I recall it. He gave me his address in Bayswater, his hours as near as might be,

and I engaged to try and find him there,—I, him, which seemed the likelier method, in our widely diverse elements, both of them so full of bustle, interruption and uncertainty. And so adieu, my friend, adieu! Neither of us had spoken with the women of the other, and each was gone his several road again,—mine not specially remembered farther.

It seems to me I never found Irving in his Bayswater lodging, I distinctly recollect seeing him, one dusty evening about eight, at the door there, mount his horse, a stout firm bay animal, of the kind called Cob, and set out towards Newman-Street, whither he rode perhaps twice or thrice a day for Church-services there were, but this, and his friendly regret at being obliged to go, is all I can recal of interview farther. Neither at the Bayswater Lodging, nor at his own House in Newman-Street when he returned thither, could I for many weeks to come ever find him "at home." In Chelsea, we poor Pair of Immigrants had, of course, much of our own to do,—and right courageously we marched together, my own brave Darling (what a store of humble but high and sacred memories to me!) victoriously carrying the flag. But at length it struck me there was something questionable in these perpetual "not-at-home's" of Irving, and that perhaps his poor jealous anxious and much-bewildered wife had her hand in the phenomenon. As proved to be the fact accordingly. I applied to William Hamilton (excellent City Scotsman, married, not over well I doubt, to a Sister of Mrs Irving's) with a brief statement of the case, and had immediate remedy—an appointment to dinner at Newman-Street on a given day, which I failed not to

observe None but Irving and his wife besides myself were there, the dinner (from a good joint of roast-beef, in a dim but quiet comfortable kind of room) was among the pleasantest of dinners to me, Madam herself wearing nothing but smiles, and soon leaving us together to a fair hour or two of free talk I think the main topic must have been my own outlooks and affairs, my project of writing on the *French Revolution*, which Irving warmly approved of (either then 'or some other time) of his Church matters we now never spoke I went away gratified, and, for my own share, glad,—had not the outlooks on his side been so dubious and ominous He was evidently growing weaker, not stronger, wearing himself down, as to me seemed too clear, by spiritual agitations, which would kill him, unless checked and ended Could he but be got to Switzerland, to Italy, I thought, to some pleasant country, of which the language was unknown to him, where he would be *forced to silence*, the one salutary medicine for him, in body and in soul! I often thought of this but he had now no Brother, no Father on whom I could practically urge it, as I would with my whole strength have done, feeling that his life now lay on it I had to hear of his growing weaker and weaker, while there was nothing whatever that I could do

With himself I do not recollect that there was anything more of interview, since that dinner in Newman-Street, or that I saw him again in the world,—except once only, to be soon noticed Latish in the Autumn some of the Kirkcaldy Martins had come, I remember speaking to his Father-in-law, at Hamilton's in Cheapside one evening, and very

earnestly on the topic that interested us both but in Martin too there was nothing of help "Grows weaker and weaker," said he, "and no Doctor can find the least disease in him So weak now, he cannot lift his little baby to his neck!" In my desperate anxiety at this time, I remember writing a Letter on my Switzerland or Italy scheme to Henry Drummond, whom I yet knew nothing more of, but considered to be probably a man of sense and practical insight, Letter stating briefly my sad and clear belief that, unless carried into some element of *perfect silence*, poor Irving would soon die,—Letter which lay some days on the mantelpiece at Chelsea, under some misgivings about sending it, and was then thrown into the fire We heard, before long, that it was decided he should journey slowly into Wales, paying visits, perhaps into Scotland which seemed the next best to what I would have proposed, and was of some hope to us And late one afternoon, soon after, we had a short farewell visit from him, his first visit to Cheyne Row, and his last,—the last we Two ever saw of him in this world It was towards sunset,—had there been any sun, that damp dim October<sup>1</sup> day,—he came ambling gently on his bay horse, sat some fifteen or twenty minutes, and went away while it was still daylight It was in the ground-floor room where I still write (thanks to *her* last service to me, shifting me thither again, the darling ever-helpful One!)—whether She was sitting with me on his entrance I don't recollect, but I well do his fine chivalrous demeanour to *her*,

<sup>1</sup> It must have been before October, for Irving, as already noted, had left London in the beginning of September

and how he complimented her (as he well might) on the pretty little room she had made for her husband and self, and running his eye over her dainty bits of arrangements, ornamentations, all so frugal, simple, full of grace, propriety and ingenuity as they ever were, said smiling, "You are like an Eve, and make a little Paradise wherever you are!" His manner was sincere, affectionate, yet with a great suppressed sadness in it, and as if with a feeling that he must not linger. It was perhaps on this occasion that he expressed to me his satisfaction at my having taken to "writing History" (*French Revolution* now begun, I suppose), study of History, he seemed to intimate, was the study of things real, practical, and actual, and would bring me closer upon all reality whatsoever. With a fine simplicity of lovingness, he bade us farewell. I followed him to the door, held his bridle (doubtless) while he mounted, no groom being ever with him on such occasions, stood on the steps as he quietly walked or ambled up Cheyne Row, quietly turned the corner (at Wright's door, or the Rector's back *garden*-door) into Cook's Grounds,<sup>1</sup>—and had vanished from my eyes for evermore. In this world neither of us ever saw him again. He was off northward in a day or two, died at Glasgow in December following,—age only forty-three gone, and, except weakness, no disease traceable.

Mrs Oliphant's Narrative is nowhere so true and touching to me as in that last portion, where it is drawn almost wholly from his own *Letters* to his Wife. All there is true to the life, and recognisable

<sup>1</sup> Street at the top of Cheyne Row, Chelsea

to me as perfect *portraiture*, what I cannot quite say of any other portion of the Book. All Mrs Oliphant's delineation shows excellent diligence, loyalty, desire to be faithful, and indeed is full of beautiful sympathy and ingenuity, but nowhere else are the features of Irving or of his Environment and Life recognisably hit, and the pretty Picture, to one who knows, looks throughout more or less romantic, *pictorial*, and "*not like*,"—till we arrive here at the grand close of all, which to me was of almost *Apocalyptic* impressiveness, when I first read it, some years ago. What a falling of the curtain, upon what a Drama! Rustic Annandale begins it, with its homely honesties, rough vernacularities, safe, innocently kind, ruggedly mother-like, cheery, wholesome, like its airy hills and clear-rushing streams, prurient corrupted London is the middle part, with its volcanic stupidities and bottomless confusions,—and the end is terrible, mysterious, godlike and awful, what Patmos could be more so? It is as if the vials of Heaven's wrath were pouring down upon a man, yet not wrath alone, for his heart is filled with trust in Heaven's goodness withal. It must be said, Irving nobly expiates whatever errors he has fallen into, like an Antique Evangelist he walks his stony course, the fixed thought of his heart, at all times, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," and these final deluges of sorrow are but washing the faithful soul of him clean.

He sent from Glasgow a curious *Letter* to his *Gift-of-Tongues* Congregation, full of questionings, dubieties upon the *Tongues* and such points, full of wanderings in deep waters, with one light fixed on

high, "Humble ourselves before God, and He will show us!"—Letter indicating a sincerity as of very death, which these New Church people (Henry Drummond and Co) first printed for useful private circulation, and then afterwards zealously suppressed and destroyed, till almost everybody but myself had forgotten the existence of it. Luckily, about two years ago, I still raked out a copy of it for "Rev Gavin Carlile" (Nephew of Irving, now editing Irving's *Select Works*, or some such title),<sup>1</sup> by whom I am glad to know it has been printed and made permanent, as a Document honourable and due to such a memory. Less *mendacious* soul of a man than my noble Irving's there could not well be.

It was but a little while before this that he had said to Drummond, what was mentioned here long since, "I ought to have seen more of T. Carlyle, and heard him more clearly, than I have done." And there is one other thing, which dates several years before, which I always esteem highly honourable to Irving's memory, and which I will note here, as my last item, since it was forgotten at its right date. Right date is that of *German Romance*, 1826,<sup>2</sup> *early*, the report is from my Brother John, to whom Irving spoke on the subject, which with me he always rather avoided. Irving did not much know Goethe, had generally a dislike to him, as to a kind of Heathen *ungodly* person and idle *Singer*, who had considerably seduced *me* from the right

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 77

<sup>2</sup> *German Romance: Specimens of its chief Authors, etc.*, was finished in 1826 but not published until the following year (4 vols. Edinburgh, 1827)

path, as one sin He read *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* nevertheless, and he said to John one day "Very curious, in this German *Poet*, here are some pages about Christ and the Christian Religion, which, as I study and re-study them, have more sense about that matter than I have found in all the Theologians I ever read!" Was not this a noble thing for such a man to feel and say? I have a hundred times recommended that Passage in *Wilhelm Meister*, to inquiring and devout souls, but, I think, never elsewhere met with one who so thoroughly recognised it. One of my last *Letters*, flung into the fire, just before leaving London the other day, was from an Oxford self-styled "religious inquirer," who asks me, if in those pages of *Meister*, there is not a wonderfully distinct foreshadow of Comte and *Positivism*? Phœbus Apollo god of the Sun, *foreshadowing* the miserablest phantasmal *algebraic ghost* I have yet met with among the ranks of the living!— —

I have now ended, and am sorry to end, what I had to say of Irving It is like bidding him farewell, for a second and the last time He waits in the Eternities, *Another*, his brightest Scholar, has left me and gone thither God be about us all Amen, amen

[Finished at Mentone, 2d January 1867,—looking towards the eastward Hills, bathed in sunshine, under a brisk west-wind, two P.M.]

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The following extracts from Carlyle's *Journal* refer to this Paper on Edward Irving



" 26th September 1866 — Writing, languidly, something which I call 'Reminiscences of Edward Irving',—which turns out hitherto to be more about myself than him. Perhaps not easy to help its being so, especially thus far? Continue it, at any rate, though good for little."

" 3d December — Have been writing (under such perpetual interruptions) 'Reminiscences of Edward Irving'<sup>2</sup> (turn out to be rather, of myself and Edward Irving<sup>1</sup>)—many pages, not yet finished, hardly once in the three days can I get to it of late—Ought probably to be *burnt* when done (and possibly enough shall), but in the meanwhile, the writing of it *clears* my own insight into those past days, has *branches* and sections still dearer to me than Irving,—and calms and soothes me as I go on."

## LORD JEFFREY

(OF FRANCIS JEFFREY, NOW LORD JEFFREY<sup>1</sup>  
THE LAWYER AND PIONEER)

MERTON, 3<sup>d</sup> JULY 1867

FEW sights have been more impressive to me than the sudden one I had of the "Outer House," in Parliament Square, Edinburgh, on the evening of 9th November 1809, some hours after my arrival in that City, for the first time. We had walked some twenty miles that day, the third day of our journey from Ecclefechan, my companion one "Tom Smail," who had already been to College last year, and was thought to be a safe guide and guardian to me—he was some years older than myself, had been at School along with me, though never in my class, —a very innocent, conceited, insignificant, but strict-minded orthodox creature, for whom, knowing him to be of no scholarship or strength of judgment, I privately had very small respect, though civilly following him about in things he knew better than I

<sup>1</sup> Francis Jeffrey "took his seat on the Bench on the 7th of June 1834. The Scotch Judges are called *Lords*, a title to which long usage has associated feelings of reverence in the minds of the people, who could not now be soon made to respect *Mr Justice*."—Cockburn's *Life of Lord Jeffrey* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1852) 1. p. 365

As in the streets of Edinburgh, for example, on my first evening there! On our journey thither he had been wearisome, far from entertaining, mostly silent, having indeed nothing to say, he stalked on generally some steps ahead, languidly whistling through his teeth some similitude of a wretched Irish tune, which I knew too well as that of a still more wretched doggrel song called "The Belfast Shoemaker,"—most melancholy to poor me, given up to my bits of reflections in the silence of the moors and hills

How strangely vivid, how remote and wonderful, tinged with the hues of far-off love and sadness, is that Journey to me now, after fifty-seven years of time! My Mother and Father walking with me, in the dark frosty November morning, through the village, to set us on our way, my dear, ever-loving Mother and her tremulous affection, my etc etc— But we must get to Edinburgh, over Moffat, over Eric-stane (Burnswark visible there for the last time, and my poor little Sister Margaret "bursting into tears" when she heard of this in my first letter home) I hid my sorrow and my weariness, but had abundance of it, chequering the mysterious hopes and forecastings of what Edinburgh and the Student element would be. Tom and I had entered Edinburgh, after twenty miles of walking, between two and three P.M., got a clean-looking, most cheap lodging ("Simon Square" the poor locality), had got ourselves brushed, some morsel of dinner doubtless, and Palnurus Tom sallied out into the streets with me, to show the novice mind a little of Edinburgh before sundown. The novice mind was not

excessively astonished all at once, but kept its eyes well open, and said nothing. What streets we went through, I don't the least recollect, but have some faint image of St Giles's High-Kirk, and of the Luckenbooths there, with their strange little ins and outs, and eager old women in miniature shops of combs, shoe-laces and trifles, still fainter image, if any whatever, of the sublime House-Statue in Parliament Square hard by,—directly after which Smail, audaciously (so I thought) pushed open a door (free to all the world), and dragged me in with him to a scene which I have never forgotten.

An immense Hall, dimly lighted from the top of the walls, and perhaps with candles burning in it here and there, all in strange *chaosmos*, and filled with what I thought (exaggeratively) a thousand or two of human creatures, all astir in a boundless buzz of talk, and simmering about in every direction, some solitary, some in groups. By degrees I noticed that some were in wig and black gown, some not, but in common clothes, all well-dressed, that here and there on the sides of the Hall, were little thrones with enclosures, and steps leading up, red-velvet figures sitting in said thrones, and the black-gowned eagerly speaking to them,—Advocates pleading to Judges, as I easily understood. How they could be heard in such a grinding din was somewhat a mystery. Higher up on the walls, stuck there like swallows in their nests, sat other humbler figures—these I found were the sources of certain wildly plangent lamentable kinds of sounds or echoes which from time to time pierced the universal noise of feet and voices, and rose unintelligibly above it, as if in the bitterness of

incurable woe,—Criers of the Court, I gradually came to understand. And this was Themis in her Outer House, such a scene of chaotic din and hurly-burly as I had never figured before. It seems to me there were four times or ten times as many people in that Outer House as there now usually are, and doubtless there is something of fact in this, such have been the curtailments and abatements of Law Practice in the Head Courts since then, and transference of it to the County jurisdictions. Last time I was in that Outer House (some six or seven years ago, in broad daylight), it seemed like a place fallen asleep, fallen almost dead.

Notable figures, now all vanished utterly, were doubtless wandering about as part of that continual hurlyburly, when I first set foot in it, fifty-seven years ago. Great Law Lords This and That, great Advocates *alors celebres* (as Thiers has it) Cranshoun, Cockburn,<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey, Walter Scott, John Clerk, to me at that time they were not even names, but I have since occasionally thought of that night and place where probably they were living substances, some of them in a kind of relation to me afterwards. Time with his *lenses*, what a miraculous Entity is he always. The only figure I distinctly recollect, and got printed on my brain that night, was John Clerk, there veritably hitching about, whose grim strong countenance with its black far-projecting brows and look of great sagacity fixed him in my memory.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Cockburn became Jeffrey's biographer. Of him, of Jeffrey, of Cranshoun and of Clerk, Lockhart gives an entertaining account in *Letters to and from his King's Bench* (3 vols. Edinburgh, 1819), ii. 43-73. The Lockhart series portraits of Jeffrey and of Clerk.

Possibly enough poor Smail named others to me, Jeffrey perhaps, if we saw him, though he was not yet quite at the top of his celebrity,—top was some three or four years afterwards, and went on without much drooping for almost twenty years more. But the truth is, except Clerk's, I carried no figure away with me, nor do I in the least recollect how we made our exit into the streets again, or what we did next. "Outer House," vivid now to a strange degree, is bordered by darkness on both hands. I recal it for Jeffrey's sake, though we see it is but potentially his, and I mean not to speak much of his Law Procedures in what follows.

Poor Smail too I may dismiss, as thoroughly insignificant, conceitedly harmless, he continued in some comradeship with me (or with James Johnstone and me) for perhaps two seasons more, but gained no regard from me, nor had any effect on me good or bad,—became, with success, an insignificant flowery Burgher Minister (somewhere in Galloway), and has died only within few years. Poor Jamie Johnstone, also my senior by several years, was far dearer, a man of real merit, with whom about my 17th—21st years I had much genial companionship but of him also I must not speak. The good, the honest, not the strong *enough*, much-suffering soul,—he died as Schoolmaster of Haddington, in a time memorable to me<sup>1</sup>. *Adieu!*

It was about 1811 when I began to be familiar with the figure of Jeffrey, as I saw him in the Courts, it was in 1812 or 1813 that he became

<sup>1</sup> Died towards the end of 1837. For Carlyle's Letters to Johnstone, see *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle* (Macmillan and Co., 1886)

universally famous, especially in Dumfriesshire, by his saving from the gallows one "Nell Kennedy," a country lass who had shocked all Scotland, and especially that region of it, by a wholesale murder, done on her next Neighbour and all his Household in mass, in the most cold-blooded and atrocious manner conceivable to the oldest artist in such horrors. Nell went down to Ecclefechan one afternoon, purchased a quantity of arsenic, walked back with it towards Burnswark Leas, her Father's Farm, stopped at Burnswark Farm, which was "old Tom Stoddart's," a couple of furlongs short of her own home, and there sat gossiping till she pretended it was too late, and that she would now sleep here with the maid. Slept, accordingly, old Tom giving no welcome, only stingy permission, rose with the family next morning, volunteered to make the porridge for breakfast, made it, could herself take none of it, went home instead, "having headache,"—and in an hour or so after, poor old Tom, his Wife, maid, and every living creature in the house (except a dog who had vomited, and *not* except the cats who couldn't) was dead or lay dying. Horror was universal in those solitary quiet regions,—on the third day, my Father, finding no lawyer take the least notice, sent a messenger express to Dumfries, whereupon the due "precognitions," due *et-ceteras*, due arrestment of Helen Kennedy with strict questioning and strict locking-up, as the essential element. I was in Edinburgh that summer of 1812, but heard enough of the matter there, in the Border regions, where it was the universal topic, perhaps not one human creature doubted but Nell was the criminal,

and would get her doom Assize-time came, Jeffrey there, and Jeffrey, by such a play of advocacy as was never seen before, bewildered the poor jury into temporary deliquium, or loss of wits (so that the poor foreman, *Scotticè* "chancellor," on whose casting-vote it turned, said at last, with the sweat bursting from his brow, "Mercy, then, mercy!"), and brought Nell clear off,—home that night, riding gently out of Dumfries in men's clothes to escape the rage of the mob The jury-chancellor, they say, on awakening next morning, smote his now dry brow, with a gesture of despair, and exclaimed, "Was I mad?" I have heard from persons who were at the trial that Jeffrey's art in examining of witnesses was extreme, that he made them seem to say almost what he would, and blocked them up from saying what they evidently wished to say, his other great resource was urging the "want of motive" on Nell's part,—no means of fancying how a blousy rustic lass should go into such a thing, thing *must* have happened otherwise! And indeed, the stagnant stupid soul of Nell, awake only to its own appetites, and torpid as dead bacon to all else in this universe, had needed uncommonly little motive a blackguard young farmer of the neighbourhood, it was understood, had answered her, in a trying circumstance, "No, oh no, I cannot marry you Tom Stoddart has a Bill against me of £50, I have no money, how can I marry?" "Stoddart, £50?" thought Nell to herself, and without difficulty decided on removing that small obstacle!—

Jeffrey's Advocate-fame from this achievement was, at last, almost greater than he wished,—as



indeed it might well be Nell was, next year, indicted again for murdering a child she had borne (supposed to be the blackguard young farmer's), she escaped this time too, by want of evidence and by good advocacy (not Jeffrey's, but the very best that could be hired by three old miser uncles, bringing out for her their long-hoarded stock with a generosity nigh miraculous), Nell, free again, proceeded next to rob the treasure-chest of these three miraculous uncles, one night, and leave them with their house on fire, and singular reflections on so delectable a niece, after which, for several years, she continued wandering in the Border byways, smuggling, stealing, etc., only intermittently heard of, but steadily mounting in evil fame, till she had become the *facile princeps* of Border Devils, and was considered a completely *uncanny* and quasi-infernal object was found twice over in Cumberland ships, endeavouring to get to America, sailors universally refusing to lift anchor till she were turned out,—did, at length, most probably smuggle herself, through Liverpool or some other place, to America, at least vanished out of Annandale, and was no more talked of there. I have seen her Father mowing at Scotsbrig as a common day-labourer, in subsequent years, a snuffling, unpleasant, deceitful-looking body, very ill thought of while still a farmer, and before his Nell took to murdering. Nell's three miraculous uncles were maternal, and come of a very honest kin.

The merit of saving such an item of the world's population could not seem to Jeffrey very great, and it was said, his brethren quizzed him upon it,

and made him rather uncomfortable. Long afterwards, at Craigenputtock, my Jeannie and I brought him on the topic, which he evidently did not like too well, but was willing to talk of for our sake and perhaps his own. He still affected to think it uncertain whether Nell was really guilty: such an intrepidity, calmness, and steadfast immovability had she exhibited, persisting in mere unshaken "No," under the severest trials by him,—but there was no persuading us that he had the least real doubt, and not some real regret rather. Advocate morality was clearly on his side, it is a strange trade, I have often thought, that of advocate: your intellect, your highest heavenly gift, hung up in the shop-window, like a loaded pistol for sale, will either blow out a pestilent scoundrel's brains, or the scoundrel's salutary sheriff's (in a sense), as you please to choose for your guinea! Jeffrey rose into higher and higher professional repute from this time, and to the last was very celebrated as what his satirists might have called a "Felon's Friend." All this, however, was swallowed among quite nobler kinds of renown, both as Advocate and as Man of Letters and Member of Society, everybody recognising his honourable ingenuity, sagacity, and opulent brilliancy of mind, and nobody ascribing his Felon help to anything but a pitying disposition, and readiness to exercise what faculty one has.

I seem to remember that I dimly rather felt there was something trivial, doubtful, and not quite of the highest type, in our Edinburgh admiration for our great Lights and Law Sages, and for Jeffrey among the rest, but I honestly admired him in a

loose way, as my neighbours were doing, "as always glad to notice him when I strolled into the Courts, and eagerly enough stepped up to hear, if I found him pleading. A delicate, attractive, dainty little figure, as he merely walked about, much more if he were speaking: uncommonly bright black eyes, instinct with vivacity, intelligence and kindly fire; roundish brow, delicate oval face full of rapid expression; figure light, nimble, pretty, though so small, perhaps hardly five feet four in height: he had his gown, almost never any wig, wore his black hair rather closely cropped,—I have seen the back part of it jerk suddenly out in some of the rapid expressions of his face, and brow, even if behind him, that his brow was then puckered, and his eyes looking archly, half-contemptuously out, in conformity to some concussive little cut his tongue was giving. His voice, clear, harmonious and sonorous, had something of metallic in it, something almost plangent; never rose into a shout, into any dissonance or shrillness, nor carried much the character of humour, though a fine feeling of the ludicrous always crept in him,—as you would notice best when he got into Scotch dialect, and gave you, with admirable truth of mimicry, old Edinburgh incidents and experiences of his. Very great upon old "Judge Brattle," "Peter Peebles," and the like—for the rest, his laugh was small, and by no means Homeric, he never laughed loud (couldn't do it, I should think), and indeed often suggested slightly that he laughed in any way

and I am sure that the first of Peter's laugh was first  
 and I am sure that the first of Peter's laugh was first  
 and I am sure that the first of Peter's laugh was first

For above a dozen or fourteen years I had been outwardly familiar with the figure of Jeffrey, before we came to any closer acquaintance, or indeed had the least prospect of any. His sphere lay far away above mine, to him in his shining elevation, my existence down among the shadows was unknown. In May 1814 I heard him once pleading in the General Assembly, on some poor Cause there,<sup>1</sup> a notable, but not the notablest thing to me, while I sat looking diligently, though mostly as dramatic spectator, into the procedures of that venerable Church Court, for the first time, which proved also the last. Queer old figures there,—Hill of St Andrews, Johnston of Crossmichael, Dr Inglis with the voice jumbling in perpetual unforeseen alternation between deep bass and shrill treble (ridiculous to hear, though shrewd cunning sense lay in it), Dr Chalmers once, etc etc,—all vanished now! Jeffrey's pleading, the first I had heard of him, seemed to me abundantly clever, full of liveliness, free-flowing ingenuity, my admiration went frankly with that of others, but I think was hardly of very deep character.

This would be the year I went to Annan, as Teacher of Mathematics,—not a gracious destiny, nor by any means a joyful, indeed a hateful, sorrowful and *imprisoning* one, could I at all have helped it, which I could not. My second year there, at Rev Mr Glen's ("reading Newton's *Principia* till three A.M.," and voraciously many other Books) was greatly more endurable, nay in parts was genial and spirited, though the paltry trade and ditto

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey's age at this time was 41. He was born 23d October 1773.

environment for most part were always odious to me. In late Autumn 1816, I went to Kirkcaldy, in like capacity, though in circumstances (what with Edward Irving's company, what with, etc etc) which were far superior. There in 1818 I had come to the grim conclusion that Schoolmastering must end, whatsoever pleased to follow, that "it were better to perish," as I exaggeratively said to myself, "than continue Schoolmastering." I made for Edinburgh,<sup>1</sup> as did Irving too, intending, I, darkly towards potential "Literature," if I durst have said or thought so, but hope hardly dwelt in me on that or on any side, only fierce resolution in abundance to do my best and utmost in all honest ways, and to suffer as silently and stoically as might be, if it proved (as too likely!) that I could do *nothing*. This kind of humour, what I sometimes called of "*desperate* hope," has largely attended me all my life. In short, as has been enough indicated elsewhere, I was advancing towards huge instalments of bodily and spiritual wretchedness in this my Edinburgh Purgatory, and had to clean and purify myself in penal fire of various kinds for several years coming,—the first and much the worst two or three of which were to be enacted in this once loved City. Horrible to think of, in part, even yet! The bodily part of them was a kind of base agony (arising mainly in the *want* of any extant or discoverable *fence* between my coarser fellow-creatures and my more sensitive self), and might and could easily (had the Age been pious or thoughtful) have been spared a poor creature like me—those hideous

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle left Kirkcaldy for Edinburgh, 20th November 1818

disturbances to sleep etc., a very little real care and goodness might prevent all that, and I look back upon it still with a kind of angry protest, and would have my successors saved from it. But perhaps one needs suffering, more than at first seems; and the spiritual agonies would not have been enough? These latter seem wholly blessed, in retrospect, and were infinitely worth suffering,—with whatever addition *was* needful! God be thanked always.

It was still some eight or ten years before any personal contact occurred between Jeffrey and me, nor did I ever tell him what a bitter passage, known to only one party, there had been between us. It was probably in 1819-1820 (the coldest winter I ever knew) that I had taken a most private resolution, and executed it in spite of physical and other misery, to try Jeffrey with an actual Contribution to the *Edinburgh Review*. The idea seemed great, and might be tried, though nearly desperate. I had got hold somewhere (for even Books were all but inaccessible to me) of a foolish enough, but new French Book, a mechanical *Theory of Gravitation*, elaborately worked out by a late foolish M Pictet (I think that was the name) in Geneva, this I carefully read, judged of, and elaborately dictated a candid account and condemnation of, or modestly firm contradiction of (my amanuensis a certain feeble, but inquiring quasi-disciple of mine, called George Dalghiesh of Annan, from whom I kept my ulterior purpose quite secret) well do I yet remember those dreary evenings in Bristo Street, oh, what ghastly passages, and dismal successive spasms of attempt, at "Literary Enterprise"—*Herich Scheno-*

*graphia*,<sup>1</sup> with poor Horrox's *Venus in sole visa*, intended for some ghastly *Life* of the said Horrox, —this for one other instance! I read all Saussure's four quartos of *Travels in Switzerland*<sup>2</sup> too (and still remember much of it), I know not with what object, I was banished, solitary, as if to the bottom of a cave, and blindly had to try many impossible roads out! My *review of Pictet* all fairly written out, in George Dalghiesh's good clerk hand, I penned some brief polite Note to the great Editor, and walked off with the small Parcel, one night,<sup>3</sup> to his address in George Street, —I very well remember leaving it with his valet there, and disappearing in the night with various thoughts and doubts! My hopes had never risen high, or in fact risen at all, but for a fortnight or so, they did not quite die out, —and then it was in absolute *seïo*, no answer, no return of MS, absolutely no notice taken, which was a form of catastrophe more complete than even I had anticipated! There rose in my head a pungent little Note, which might be written to the great man, with neatly cutting considerations offered him from the small unknown ditto, but I wisely judged it was still more dignified to let the matter lie as it was, and take what I had got for my own benefit only

<sup>1</sup> Johannes Hevelius (born at Dantzic 1611, died 1688), one of the most eminent astronomers of his time. His *Selenographia*, Description of the Moon, was published at Dantzic 1647. In 1662 he added to his *Mercurius in sole visus*, Horrox's Dissertation on the Transit of Venus, which Horrox was the first to observe, in 1639. Horrox died, only 22 years old, in 1641.

<sup>2</sup> Saussure, *Voyages dans les Alpes* (4 vols., 4to, à Genève, 1779 to 1795).

<sup>3</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> January 1820.

Nor did I ever mention it to almost anybody, least of all to Jeffrey, in subsequent changed times, when at any rate it was fallen extinct. It was my second, not quite my first attempt in that fashion, above two years before, from Kirkcaldy, I had forwarded to some Magazine Editor in Edinburgh what perhaps was a likelier little Article (of descriptive Tourist kind, after a real Tour by Yarrow Country into Annandale), which also vanished without sign, not much to my regret, that first one, nor indeed very much the second either (a dull affair altogether, I could not but admit),—and no third adventure of the kind lay ahead for me. It must be owned my first entrances into glorious "Literature" were abundantly stinted and pitiful, but a man does enter it, even with a small gift, he persists and perhaps it is no disadvantage if the door be several times slammed in his face, as a preliminary.

In spring 1827, I suppose it must have been, a Letter came to me at Comley Bank from Procter ("Barry Cornwall," my quondam London acquaintance) offering, with some "congratulations" etc, to introduce me formally to Jeffrey, whom he certified to be a "very fine fellow," with much kindness in him, among his other known qualities. Comley Bank, except for one Darling Soul, whose heavenly nobleness then as ever afterwards shone on me, and *should* have made the darkest place bright (ah me, ah me, I only know now how noble She was!), was a gloomy intricate abode to me, and, in retrospect, has little or nothing of pleasant but *Her*. This of Jeffrey, however, had a practical character, of some promise, and I remember stiding off with Procter's



introduction, one evening, towards George Street and Jeffrey (perhaps by appointment of hour and place by himself), in rather good spirits "I shall see the famous man then," thought I, "and if he can do nothing for me, why *not*!" I got ready admission into Jeffrey's "study," or rather "office," for it had mostly that air, a roomy not over-neat apartment on the ground floor, with a big baize-covered table, loaded with book rows and paper bundles, on one or perhaps two of the walls were book-shelves, likewise well filled, but with books in tattered ill-bound or unbound condition,—“bad new Literature, these will be,” thought I, “the table ones are probably on Law!” Fire, pair of candles were cheerfully burning, in the light of which sat my famous little gentleman, laid aside his work, cheerfully invited me to sit, and began talking in a perfectly human manner. Our dialogue was altogether human and successful, lasted for perhaps twenty minutes (for I could not consume a great man’s time), turned upon the usual topics, what I was doing, what I had published,—*German Romance* Translations,<sup>1</sup> my last thing, to which I remember he said kindly, “We must give you a lift!” an offer which, in some complimentary way, I managed, to his satisfaction, to decline. My feeling with him was that of unembarrassment, a reasonable, veracious little man, I could perceive, with whom any truth one felt good to utter would have a fair chance. Whether much was said of German Literature, whether anything at all on my writing of it for him, I don’t recollect but certainly I took my leave in a gratified successful kind of

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, p. 218.

mood, and both those topics, the latter in practical form, did soon abundantly spring up between us, with formal return-call by him (which gave a new speed to intimacy), agreement for a little Paper on *Jean Paul*, and whatever could follow out of an acquaintanceship well begun. The poor Paper on *Jean Paul*, a sturdy Piece, not without humour and substance of my own, appeared in (I suppose) the very next Edinburgh Review,<sup>1</sup> and made what they call a sensation among the Edinburgh buckrams, which was greatly heightened, next Number, by the more elaborate and grave article on *German Literature*<sup>2</sup> generally, which set many tongues wagging, and some few brains considering, *What* this strange monster could be that was come to disturb their quiescence, and the established order of Nature! Some Newspapers or Newspaper took to denouncing "the Mystic School,"—which my bright little Woman declared to consist of me alone, or of her and me, and, for a long while after, merrily used to designate us by that title, "Mystic School" signifying "*us*," in the pretty *coture*-speech, which she was always so ready to adopt, and which lent such a charm to her talk and writing. She was beautifully gay and hopeful under these improved phenomena,—the darling soul! *Foreign Review*, *Foreign Quarterly*, etc, followed, to which I was eagerly invited, Articles for Jeffrey (about parts of which I had always to dispute with him) appeared also, from time to time. In a word, I was now in a

<sup>1</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, No 91, June 1827

<sup>2</sup> *State of German Literature*, for this, and the Article on *Jean Paul* see Carlyle's *Miscellany* vol 1

sort, fairly launched upon Literature, and had even, to sections of the public, become a "Mystic School,"—not quite prematurely, being now of the age of thirty-two, and having had my bits of experiences, and gotten really something which I wished much to say,—and have ever since been saying, the best way I could

After Jeffrey's call at Comley Bank, the intimacy rapidly increased. He was much taken with my little Jeannie, as he well might be, one of the brightest and cleverest creatures in the whole world, full of innocent rustic simplicity and veracity, yet with the gracefullest discernment, calmly natural deportment, instinct with beauty and intelligence to the finger-ends<sup>1</sup>. He became, in a sort, her would-be openly declared friend and quasi-lover, as was his way in such cases. He had much the habit of flirting about with women, especially pretty women, much more the both pretty and clever, all in a "realish, mostly dramatic, and wholly theoretic way (his age now fifty gone), would daintily kiss their hands in bidding good morning, offer his due *homage*, as he phrased it, trip about half like a lap-dog, half like a human adorer, with speeches pretty and witty, always of trifling import. I have known some women (not the prettiest) take offence at it, and awkwardly draw themselves up,—but without in the least putting him out. The most took it quietly, kindly; and found an entertainment to themselves in cleverly answering it, as he did in partly offering it,—partly, yet with something of real reverence, and always in a delightful way. Consider his jealousy, attended with the presence of his circle, among the non-

reigning, who soon detected her position, and gave her the triumph of their sometimes half-visible spleen. An airy environment of this kind was, wherever possible, a coveted charm in Jeffrey's way of life<sup>1</sup>. I can fancy he had seldom made such a surprising and agreeable acquaintance as this new one at Comley Bank! My little Woman perfectly understood all that sort of thing the methods and the rules of it and could lead her clever little gentleman a very pretty minuet, as far as she saw good. They discovered mutual old cousinships by the maternal side soon had common topics enough, I believe he really

Jeffrey's acquaintanceship seemed, and was for the time, an immense acquisition to me, and everybody regarded it as my highest good fortune,—though in the end it did not practically amount to much. Meantime it was very pleasant, and made us feel as if no longer cut off and isolated, but fairly admitted, or like to be admitted, and taken in tow, by the world and its actualities. Jeffrey had begun to feel some form of bad health at this time (some remains of disease in the *trachea*, caught on circuit somewhere, "successfully defending a murderess" it was said!)—he rode almost daily, in intervals of Court business, a slow amble, easy to accompany on foot, and I had much walking with him, and many a pleasant sprightly dialogue,—cheerful to my fancy (as speech with an important man), but less instructive than I might have hoped. To my regret, he would not talk of his experiences in the world, which I considered would have been so instructive to me, nor of things concrete and current, but was theoretic generally, and seemed to go on, first of all, converting me from what he offered my "German Mysticism,"—back merely, as I liked to perceive, into dead Edinburgh Whiggism, Scepticism, and Materialism, what I felt to be a forever impossible enterprise. We had long discussions, and argumentative parryings and thrustings, which I have known continue, night after night, till two or three in the morning (when I was his guest at Craigcrook,<sup>1</sup> as once or twice happened in coming years), there

<sup>1</sup> Craigcrook, as already noted, is about three miles to the north west of Edinburgh, on the eastern slope of Corstorphine Hill. Jeffrey's summers, from 1815 till his death in 1850, were spent there.

we went on in brisk logical exercise, with all the rest of the house asleep, and parted usually in good humour, though after a game which was hardly worth the candle. I found him infinitely witty, ingenious, sharp of fence, but not in any sense deep, and used without difficulty to hold my own with him. A pleasant enough exercise, but at last not a very profitable one.

He was ready to have tried anything in practical help of me, and did, on hint given, try two things vacant "Professorship of Moral Philosophy" at St Andrews, ditto of something similar (perhaps it was "English Literature") in the new Gower-Street University at London, but both (thank Heaven) came summarily to nothing. Nor were his Review Articles any longer such an important employment to me, nor had they ever been my least troublesome undertakings,—plenty of small discrepancy about details as we went along, though no serious disagreement ever, and his treatment throughout was liberal and handsome. Indeed he had much patience with me, I must say, for there was throughout a singular freedom in my way of talk with him, and, although far from wishing or intending to be disrespectful, I doubt there was at times an unembarrassed and frankness of hitting and repelling, which did not quite beseeem our respective ages and positions. He never testified the least offence, but, possibly enough, remembered it afterwards, being a thin-skinned, sensitive man, with all his pretended pococurantism, and real knowledge of what is called "the world." I remember pleasant strolls out to Craigcrook (one of the prettiest places in the world),

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where, on a Sunday especially, I might hope, what was itself a rarity with me, to find a companionable human acquaintance, not to say one of such quality as this. He would wander about the woods with me, looking on the Frith, and Fife Hills, on the Pentlands and Edinburgh Castle and City,—nowhere was there such a view,—perhaps he would walk most of the way back with me, quietly sparkling and chatting, probably quizzing me in a kind way, if his Wife were with us, as sometimes happened. If I met him in the streets, in the Parliament House or accidentally anywhere, there ensued, unless he were engaged, a cheerful bit of talk and promenading. He frequently rode round by Comley Bank in returning home, and there I would see him, or hear something pleasant of him. He never rode but at a walk, and his little horse was steady as machinery. He on horseback, I on foot, was a frequent form of our dialogues. I suppose we must have dined sometimes at Craigmuck, or Moray Place, in this incipient period, but don't recollect.

The incipient period was probably among the best, though for a long while afterwards there was no falling off in intimacy and good will. But sunrise is often enough lovelier than noon. Much in this first stage was not yet fulfilment, and was enhanced by the colours of hope, there was the new feeling too, of what a precious conquest and acquisition had fallen to us, which all the world might envy. Certainly in every sense the adventure was a flattering and cheering one, and did both of us good. I forget how long it had lasted, before our resolution to remove to Craigenputtock came

to be fulfilled—it seems to me, some six or eight months? The sitting to Craigenputtock took place in May 1828, we staid a week in Moray Place (Jeffrey's fine new house there) after our furniture was all on the road, and we were waiting till it should arrive, and render a new home possible amid the moors and mountains. Jeffrey promised to follow us thither, with Wife and Daughter, for three days in vacation time ensuing, to see what kind of a thing we were making of it. Which, of course, was great news. Doubtless he, like most of my Edinburgh acquaintances, had been strongly dissuasive of the step we were taking; but his or other people's arguments availed nothing, and I have forgotten them, the step had been well meditated, saw itself to be founded on irrefragable considerations, of health, *finance*, etc, etc, unknown to bystanders, and could not be forborne or altered. "I will come and see you at any rate!" said Jeffrey, and dismissed us with various expressions of interest, and no doubt with something of real regret.

Of our History at Craigenputtock there might a great deal be written which might amuse the curious for it was in fact a very singular scene and arena for such a pair as my Darling and me, with such a Life ahead, and bears some analogy to the settlement of Robinson Crusoe in his desert Isle, surrounded mostly by the wild populations, not wholly helpful or even harmless, and requiring, for its equipment into habitability and convenience, infinite contrivance, patient adjustment, and natural ingenuity in the head of Robinson himself. It is a History I by no means intend to write,—with such or with

any other. To me there is a confusion of interests in the movement only with the other. It was the field of endless richness and beautiful talent and virtue in her this is not good: also of good industry, and many loving and blessed thoughts in support of the thing done by her side. Poverty and want of education had given wings to it and continued to provide fuel for the more transformation, by human nature of various sorts into a kind of dream, and mystery: something of high and great death in it, though nothing could be smaller and lower than very many of the details. Her classes might prove useful to be in the southern communities, if only their vision and ability to observe and to see another way of world, great. It looks to me now like a kind of human mass-organised system that served their sentiment as Christianity: very poor in the world's goods but not without an immense dignity, power and more important than the expected. There's very coming to her and her families and magnanimities: without whom it had not been possible. I incline to think it the poorest place that could have been selected for the spreading out, unity and comparison of anything useful which that day have been in me against the years that were coming. And it is certain that for living in and thinking in I have never since found in the world a place so favourable. And we were driven and pushed into it by necessity and the bare fact of hunger, cold, and disease and poverty, and the most gradually compelling of motives. For I remember that those are the only things that

how we will ' often in my life, have I been brought to think of this, as probably every considering person is, and, looking before and after, have felt, though reluctant enough to believe in the importance or significance of so infinitesimally small an atom as oneself, that the Doctrine of a Special Providence is in some sort natural to man. All piety points that way, all logic points the other,—one has, in one's darkness and limitation, a trembling faith, and can at least say with the *Voices*, "*Wir heissen euch hoffen*,"—if it be the will of the Highest.

The Jeffreys failed not to appear at Craigenputtock, their big Carriage climbed our rugged Hill-roads, landed the Three Guests (young Charlotte, "Sharlie," with Pa and Ma) and the clever old Valet-maid that waited on them, stood three days under its glazed sheeting in our little back-court,—nothing like a house yet ready for it, and indeed all the outhouses and appurtenances still in a much unfinished state, and only the main House quite ready and habitable. The visit was pleasant and successful, but I recollect few or no particulars Jeffrey and I rode one day (or perhaps this was on another visit?), round by the flank of Dunscore Craig, the Shilling-land and Craigenvey, and took a view of Loch-Orr and the black moorlands round us, with the granite mountains of Galloway overhanging in the distance, not a beautiful landscape, but it answered as well as another. Our party, the head of it especially, was chatty and cheery, but I remember nothing so well as the consummate art with which my Dear One played the domestic field-marshal, and spread out our exiguous resources,

without fuss or bustle, to cover everything [with a] coat of hospitality and even elegance and abundance, I have been in houses ten times, nay a hundred times, as rich, where things went not so well. Though never bred to this, but brought up in opulent plenty by a mother that could bear no partnership in house-keeping, she, finding it become necessary, loyally applied herself to it, and soon surpassed in it all the women I have ever seen. My noble one, how beautiful has our poverty made thee to me! She was so true and frank, withal, nothing of the skulking Balderstone in her. One day at dinner, I remember, Jeffrey admired the fritters or bits of pancake he was eating, and she let him know, not without some vestige of shock to him, that she had made them. "What, you! Twirl up the frying-pan, and catch them in the air?" Even so, my high friend, and you may turn it over in your mind!—On the fourth or third day, the Jeffreys went, and "carried off our little temporary paradise," as I sorrowfully expressed it to them, while shutting their Coach door in our back yard,—to which bit of pathos Jeffrey answered by a friendly little sniff of quasi-mockery, or laughter through the nose, and rolled prosperously away.

They paid at least one other visit, probably not just next year, but the one following. We met them, by appointment, at Dumfries (I think, in the intervening year), and passed a night with them in the King's Arms Inn there, which I well enough recollect huge ill-kept 'Head-Inn,' bed opulent in *bugs*, waiter, a monstrous baggy unwieldy old figure, hebe-tated, dreary, as if parboiled, upon whom Jeffrey

quizzed his Daughter at breakfast, "Comes all of eating eggs, Sharlie, poor man as good as owned it to me!"—After breakfast, he went across with my Wife to visit a certain Mrs Richardson, Authoress of some Novels, really a superior kind of woman and much a lady, who had been an old flame of his, perhaps twenty-five or thirty years before "These old loves don't do!" said Mrs Jeffrey, with easy sarcasm, who was left behind with me And accordingly there had been some embarrassment, I afterwards found, but on both sides a gratifying of some good though melancholy feelings

This Mrs Jeffrey was the American Miss Wilkes, whose marriage with Jeffrey, or at least his voyage across to marry her, had made considerable noise in its time<sup>1</sup> She was mother of this "Sharlie" (who is now the widow Mrs Empson), Jeffrey had no other child, his first wife, a Hunter of St Andrews, had died very soon<sup>2</sup> This second, the American Miss Wilkes, was from Pennsylvania, actual Brother's-Daughter of our *Demagogue* "Wilkes,"—she was Sister of the "Commodore Wilkes," who 'boarded

<sup>1</sup> Miss Wilkes (daughter of Mr Charles Wilkes, banker in New York, who was nephew, not brother, of the famous John) had, in 1810, paid a visit to some friends in Edinburgh, where Jeffrey became acquainted with her They were married in New York in 1813, and returned to Scotland early in 1814. The "War of 1812" was then being carried on between England and America. Before leaving the United States, Jeffrey had to apply for a cartel for his return home, when he was drawn into conversation with the Secretary of State, Mr Monroe, as to the war, its provocations, principles and probable results. Afterwards, the same day, he dined with the President, Mr Madison, when the same topics were discussed for nearly two hours (see *Cockburn*, i 227 229) Jeffrey's reports of these conversations could not fail to produce some effect in England at the time

<sup>2</sup> In 1805, in the fourth year of her married life

the *Trent* some years ago, and almost involved us in war with Yankeeland, during that beautiful Nigger Agony or "Civil War" of theirs! She was a roundish-featured, not pretty but comely, sincere and hearty kind of woman, with a great deal of clear natural insight, often sarcastically turned, to which a certain nervous tic or jerk of the head gave new emphasis or singularity; for her talk went roving about in a loose random way, and hit down, like a flail, unexpectedly on this and that, with the jerk for accompaniment, in a really genial fashion. She and I were mutual favourites; she liked my sincerity, as I hers.

The "Old-Love" business finished, our friends soon rolled away; and left us to go home at leisure,—in our good old Gig (value £11), which I always look back upon with a kind of veneration, so sound and excellent was it, though so unfashionable, the conquest of good Alick, my ever-shifty Brother, which carried us many a pleasant mile till Craigenputtock ended. Probably the Jeffreys were bound for Cumberland on this occasion, to see Brougham, of whom, as I remember, Mrs Jeffrey spoke to me with candour, not with enthusiasm, during that short "Old-Love" absence. Next year<sup>1</sup> (it must have been), they all came again to Craigenputtock; and with more success than ever.

One of the nights, there, on this occasion, encouraged possibly by the presence of poor James Anderson an ingenious simple youngish man, and our nearest *gentleman* neighbour,—Jeffrey in the Drawing-room, was clearer brighter and more

amusing than I ever saw him elsewhere. We had got to talk of public speaking; of which Jeffrey had plenty to say, and found Anderson and all of us ready enough to hear. Before long he fell into mimicking of public Speakers,—men unknown, perhaps imaginary generic specimens,—and did it with such a felicity, flowing readiness, ingenuity and perfection of imitation as I never saw equalled, and had not given him credit for before. Our cosy little Drawing-room, bright-shining, hidden in the lonely wildernesses, how beautiful it looked to us, become suddenly, as it were, a Temple of the Muses! The little man strutted about, full of electric fire, with attitudes, with gesticulations, still more with winged words, oftener *broken*-winged, amid our admiring laughter, gave us the windy-grandiloquent specimen, the ponderous-stupid, the airy-ditto, various specimens, as the talk, chiefly his own, spontaneously suggested them, of which there was a little preparatory interstice between each two, and the mimicry was so complete, you would have said, not his mind only, but his very body became the specimen's, his face filled with the expression represented, and his little figure seeming to grow gigantic if the personage required it. At length he gave us the abstruse-costive specimen, which had a meaning and no utterance for it, but went about clambering, stumbling as on a path of loose boulders, and ended in total downbreak, amid peals of the heartiest laughter from us all. This of the aerial little sprite, standing there in fatal collapse, with the brightest of eyes sternly gazing into utter nothingness and dumbness, was one of the most tickling and genially ludicrous



things I ever saw, and it prettily winded up our little drama.<sup>1</sup> I often thought of it afterwards, and of what a part mimicry plays among human gifts. In its lowest phase, no talent can be lower (for even the Papuans and monkeys have it), but in its highest, where it gives you *domestic* in the spiritual world of a Shakspeare or a Goethe, there are only some few that are higher. No clever man, I suppose, is originally without it. Dickens's essential faculty, I often say, is that of a first-rate Play-actor, had he been born twenty or forty years sooner, we should most probably have had a second and greater Mathews, Incedon, or the like, and no *writing* Dickens.

It was probably next morning after this (one of these mornings it certainly was) that we received, i.e. Jeffrey did (I think through my Brother John, then vaguely trying for "Medical Practice" in London, and present on the scene referred to), a sternly brief Letter from poor Hazlitt, to the effect, and almost in the words, "Dear Sir, I am dying can you send me £10, and so consummate your many kindnesses to me? W Hazlitt." This was for Jeffrey, my Brother's Letter to me, enclosing this, would of course elucidate the situation. Jeffrey with true

<sup>1</sup> "It may appear an odd thing to say, but it is true, that the listener's pleasure was enhanced by the personal littleness of the speaker. A large man could scarcely have thrown off Jeffrey's conversational flowers without exposing himself to ridicule. But the liveliness of the deep thoughts, and the flow of the bright expressions, that animated his talk, seemed so natural and appropriate to the figure that uttered them, that they were heard with something of the delight with which the slenderness of the trembling throat, and the quivering of the wings, make us enjoy the strength and clearness of the notes of a little bird — *C. Murn*, i 364

sympathy, at once wrote a cheque for £50,<sup>1</sup> and poor Hazlitt died, in peace from duns at least. He seemed to have no *old* friends about him, to be left, in his poor Lodging, to the humanity of medical people, and transient recent acquaintances, and to be dying in a grim stoical humour, like a worn-out soldier in hospital. The new Doctor people reckoned that a certain Dr Darling, the first called in, had fatally mistreated him. Hazlitt had just finished his toilsome, unrewarded (not quite worthless) *Life of Napoleon*,<sup>2</sup> which at least recorded his own loyal admiration and quasi-adoration of that questionable Person after which he felt excessively worn and low, and was, by unlucky Dr Darling, recommended, not to Port wine, brown soup, and the like generous regimen, but to a course of purgatives and blue pills, which irrecoverably wasted his last remnants of strength, and brought him to his end in this sad way. Poor Hazlitt, he was never admirable to me, but I had my estimation of him, my pity for him, — a man recognisably of fine natural talents and aspirations, but of no sound culture whatever, and flung into the roaring cauldron of stupid prurient anarchic London, there to try if he could find some culture for himself!

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle has mentioned this before (see *supra*, i 85). The sum requested was £100, and Jeffrey's £50 never reached Hazlitt. In a letter, dated 18th September 1830, to his brother John, in London, Carlyle says "He [Jeffrey] has got a letter from Hazlitt, strangely requesting £100 from him, and determines to consult you on the subject, and in the meantime to send £50 through your hands." Dr Carlyle's reply to this letter, dated 25th October 1830, says that Jeffrey's kind gift did not arrive until after Hazlitt's death, which occurred on the 18th September 1830.

<sup>2</sup> Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon* (4 vols London, 1827)

This was Jeffrey's last visit to Craigenputtock: I forget when it was (probably next Autumn late) that we made our fortnight's visit to Craigerook and him. That was a shining sort of affair, but did not in effect, accomplish much for any of us. Perhaps for one thing, we staid too long. Jeffrey was beginning to be seriously incommoded in health,—had bad sleep, cared not how late he sat, and we had now more than ever a series of sharp fencing-bouts, night after night, which could decide nothing for either of us, except our radical incompatibility in respect of World-Theory and the incurable divergence of our opinions on the most important matters. 'You are so dreadfully in earnest!' said he to me once or oftener. Besides, I own now, I was deficient in reverence to him, and had not then, nor, alas, have ever acquired in my solitary and mostly silent existence, the art of gently saying strong things or of insinuating my dissent, instead of uttering it right out at the risk of offence or otherwise. At bottom I did not find his the highest kind of insight in regard to any province whatever. In Literature he had a respectable range of reading, but discovered little serious study, and had no views which I could adopt in preference. On all subjects, I had to refuse him the title of deep, and secretly to acquiesce in much that the new Opposition Party (Wilson Lockhart, etc. who had broken out so outrageously in *Burke's* for the last ten years) were alleging against the old excessive Edinburgh Hero-worship. An unpleasant fact, which probably was not quite hidden to so keen a pair of eyes. One thing struck me, in sad elucidation of his forensic



indeed neither Hers nor mine were ever of much importance except for the passing moment. I ought to add that Jeffrey, about this time (next summer, I should think) generously offered to confer on me an annuity of £100,—which annual sum, had it fallen on me from the clouds, would have been of very high convenience at that time, but which I could not, for a moment, have dreamt of accepting as gift or subventionary help from any fellow-mortal. It was at once, in my handsomest, gratefulest but brief and conclusive way [declined] from Jeffrey “Republican Equality the silently fixed law of human society at present, each man to live on his own resources, and have an *Equality* of economies with every other man, dangerous, and not possible except through cowardice or folly, to depart from said clear rule,—till perhaps a better era rise on us again!” Jeffrey returned to the charge, twice over, in handsome enough sort, but my new answer was, in briefest words, a repetition of the former, and the second time I answered nothing at all, but stood by other topics, upon which the matter dropped altogether. It was not mere pride of mine that frustrated this generous resolution, but sober calculation as well, and correct weighing of the results probable in so dangerous a copartnery as that proposed. In no condition well conceivable to me could such a proposal have been accepted, and though I could not doubt but Jeffrey had intended an act of real generosity, for which I was and am grateful, perhaps there was something in the manner of it that savoured

having been given to her at her request, shortly after the publication of these *Reminiscences*, in 1881

of consciousness, and of screwing one's self up to the point, less of godlike pity for a fine fellow and his struggles, than of human determination to do a fine action of one's own,—which might add to the promptitude of my refusal. He had abundance of money, but he was not of that opulence which could render such an "annuity," in case I should accept it, totally insensible to him. I therefore *endeavoured* all the more to be thankful, and if the heart would not quite do (as was perhaps the case), forced the intellect to take part, which it does at this day. Jeffrey's beneficence was undoubted, and his gifts to poor people in distress were a known feature of his way of life. I once, some months after this, borrowed £100 from him (my pitiful bits of "Periodical-Literature" incomings having gone awry, as they were too liable to do), but was able, I still remember with what satisfaction, to repay punctually within a few weeks—and this was all of pecuniary chivalry *we* two ever had between us.

Probably he was rather cooling in his feelings towards me, if they ever had been very warm. So obstinate and rugged had he found me, "so dreadfully in earnest"! And now the time of the Reform Bill was coming on, Jeffrey and all high Whigs getting summoned into an Official career,—and a scene opening, which (in effect), instead of irradiating with new glory and value, completely clouded the remaining years of Jeffrey's life. His health had for some years been getting weaker,—and proved now unequal to his new honours. That was the fatal circumstance, which rendered all the others irredeemable. He was not what you could call ambitious,

rather the reverse of that, though he relished public honours, especially if they could be interpreted to signify public love. I remember his great pleasure in having been elected Dean of Faculty,<sup>1</sup> perhaps a year or so before anything of this Reform agitation, and my surprise at the real delight he showed in this proof of general regard from his fellow Advocates. But now, ambitious or not, he found the career flung open, all barriers thrown down, and was forced to enter, all the world at his back crushing him in.

He was, naturally, appointed Lord Advocate<sup>2</sup> (political president of Scotland), had to get shoved into Parliament,—some vacancy created for him by the great Whigs, “Malton in Yorkshire” the place and was whirled away to London and Public Life, age now about fifty-six, and health bad. I remem-

<sup>1</sup> Elected Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, 2d July 1829 — *Cockburn*, i. 283

<sup>2</sup> In December 1830 — “There is no situation native to Scotland of greater trust or dignity than that of Lord Advocate. In so far as each is the legal adviser of the crown in their respective countries, the Lord Advocate is in Scotland something like the Attorney General in England. But, practically, their positions are very different. The total official emoluments of the Lord Advocate are, on an average, not above £3000 a year, in addition to which, his only other reward, or hope of reward, consists in the chance of judicial promotion. His direct patronage is exceedingly slender, and for the patron, patronage is more of a torture than of a reward. For these considerations he has to obtain 7 serfs, or seats, in Parliament, which, between December 1830 and May 1832, cost Jeffrey about £10,000. Then he has to go to London, and to return so often, or to remain so long, that his practice is greatly injured and generally extinguished. If an eminent lawyer, without parliamentary ambition, and with no taste for sweltering in London, but making a respectable income, and living at home in peace, wishes to be sleepless all night, and hot all day, and not half so useful as he might be, let him become Lord Advocate.” — *Cockburn*, i. 327-329

ber, in his correspondence, considerable misgivings, and gloomy forecastings, about all this, which, in my inexperience, and the general exultation then prevalent, I had treated with far less regard than they merited. He found them too true, and, what I as bystander could not quite see till long after, that his worst expectations were realised. The exciting agitated scene, abroad and at home, the unwholesome hours, bad air, noisy hubbub of St Stephen's, and at home the incessant press of crowds, and of business mostly new to him,—rendered his life completely miserable, and gradually broke down his health altogether. He had some momentary glows of exultation,—and dashed off triumphant bits of *Letters* to my Wife, which I remember we both of us thought somewhat juvenile and idyllic (especially one written in the House of Commons Library, just after his 'Great Speech,'<sup>1</sup> and "with the cheers of that House still ringing in my ears"), and which neither of us pitied withal to the due degree, for there was in the heart of all of them,—even of that 'great speech' one,—a deep misery traceable, a feeling how blessed the old peace and rest would be, and that peace and rest were now fled far away! We laughed considerably at this huge hurlyburly, comparable in certain features to a huge Sorcerers' Sabbath prosperously dancing itself out in the distance, and little knew how lucky we were, instead of unlucky (as perhaps was sometimes one's idea in perverse moments) to have no concern with it except as spectators in the shilling gallery or the two-shilling!—

<sup>1</sup> Speech on the Reform Bill, delivered March 1831. See *infra*, p. 261 "



About the middle of August [1831], as elsewhere marked, I set off for London, with *Sartor Resartus* in my Pocket. I found Jeffrey much preoccupied and bothered, but willing to assist me with Bookseller Murray and the like, and studious to be cheerful. He lived in Jermyn Street, Wife and Daughter with him, in lodgings at £11 a week, in melancholy contrast to the beautiful tenements and perfect equipments they had left in the North. On the Ground-floor, in a room of fair size, was a kind of Secretary, a blear-eyed, tacit Scotch figure, standing or sitting at a desk with many papers, this room seemed also to be ante-room, or waiting-room, into which I was once or twice shown if important company were upstairs. The Secretary never spoke, hardly even answered when spoken to, except by an ambiguous smile or sardonic grin. He seemed a shrewd enough fellow, and to stick faithfully by his own trade. Upstairs on the first-floor were the apartments of the family, Lord Advocate's bedroom, the back portion of the sitting-room, shut off from it merely by a folding door. If I called in the morning, in quest perhaps of Letters<sup>1</sup> (though I don't recollect much troubling *him* in that way), I would find the family still at breakfast, ten A.M. or later, and have seen poor Jeffrey emerge in flowered dressing-gown, with a most boiled and suffering expression of face, like one who had slept miserably, and now awoke mainly to paltry misery and bother,—poor Official man! "I am made a mere Post-Office of!" I heard him once grumble,

<sup>1</sup> Letters for Carlyle addressed to Jeffrey's care,—Letters to Members of Parliament being conveyed free of cost in those days

after tearing open several Packets, not one of which was internally for himself

Later in the day you were apt to find certain Scotch people dangling about, on business or otherwise,—Rutherford the advocate<sup>1</sup> a frequent figure, I never asked or guessed on what errand, he, florid fat and joyous, his old Chieftain very lean and dreary. On the whole, I saw little of the latter in those first weeks, and might have recognised more than I did, how to me he strove always to be cheerful and obliging, though himself so heavy-laden and internally wretched. One day he did my Brother John, for my sake (or perhaps for *Heirs* still more) an easy service, which proved very important. A Dr Baron of Gloucester had called one day, and incidentally noticed that “the Lady Clare” (a great, though most unfortunate, and at length professedly valetudinary Lady) “wanted a Travelling Physician, being bound forthwith to Rome.” Jeffrey, the same day, on my calling, asked “Wouldn’t it suit your Brother?” and in a day or two the thing was completely settled, and John, to his and our great satisfaction (I still remember him on the Coach-box in Regent’s Circus), under way into his new Roman locality, and what proved his new career<sup>2</sup>. My Darling had arrived before this last step of the process, and was much obliged by what her little “Duke” had done. Duke was the name we called him by,—for a foolish reason, connected with one of Macaulay’s swaggering Articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, and

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards The Right Hon Andrew Rutherford, Jeffrey’s successor as Lord Advocate

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, p 201 //

an insolent response to it in *Blackwood* "horse-whipped by a Duke," Macaulay had said, of his victim, in the Article,—“Duke, quotha,” answered *Blackwood*, “such a set of *Dukes* !”—and hinted that “Duke Macaulay” and “the Duke of Craig-crook” were extremely unheraldic dignitaries both of them !

By my Jeannie, too, had come, for John and me, the last Note we ever had from our Father it was full of the profoundest *sorrow* (now that I recal it), “drawing nigh to the gates of Death ,”—which none of us regarded as other than common dispiritment, and the weak chagrin of old age Ah me, how blind, how indifferent are all of us to sorrows that lie remote from us, and in a sphere not ours ! In vain did our brave old Father, sinking in the black gulfs of eternity, seek even to convince us that he was sinking Alone, left alone, with only a tremulous and fitful, though eternal star of hope, *he* had to front that adventure for himself,—with an awe-struck imagination of it, such as few or none of men now know More valiant soul I have never seen, nor one to whom Death was more unspeakably “the *King of Terrors*” Death, and the *Judgment-Bar* of the Almighty following it, may well be terrible to the bravest, Death, with *nothing* of that kind following it,—one readily enough finds cases where that is insignificant to very mean and silly creatures Within three months my Father was suddenly gone I might have noticed something of what the old Scotch people used to call *fey*<sup>1</sup> in his last parting with me (though I did not then so read it, nor do

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, i 51 n

superstitiously now, but only *understand* it and the superstition) it is visible in Friedrich Wilhelm's ultimatum too. But nothing of all that belongs to this place!—My Jeannie had brought us *silhouettes* of all the faces she had found at Scotsbrig, one of them, and I find they are all still at Chelsea, is the only outward shadow of my Father's face now left me —thanks to her for this also, the dear and ever-helpful One!—

After her arrival, and our settlement in the Miles's lodgings ("4 Ampton Street, Gray's Inn Lane," a place I will go to see if I return<sup>1</sup>), Jeffrey's appearances were more frequent and satisfactory. Very often in the afternoon he came to call, for her sake mainly I believe, though mostly I was there too,—I perceive now, his little visits to that unfashionable place were probably the golden item of his bad and troublous day, poor Official man begirt with empty botherations! I heard gradually that he was not reckoned "successful" in Public Life, that as Lord Advocate, the Scotch with their multifarious businesses found him irritable, impatient (which I don't wonder at), that his "great Speech" with "the cheers of that House," etc. etc., had been a Parliamentary failure rather, unadapted to the place,<sup>1</sup>—and, what was itself very mortifying, that the Reporters had complained of his "Scotch accent" to excuse themselves for

<sup>1</sup> See *St. Ann.*, p. 257 n.—"It is certainly general, and too much above the common grapple of parliamentary contention, but out of the whole speeches that were delivered throughout the two years that the question was discussed, no better argument in favour of the principle and necessity of the measure, on its general grounds, is extractable. Still, as a debating speech, it fell below the expectations both of his friends and of himself"—*C. 2c 177*, 1 314



through Lincoln's Inn Fields, launched him safe in Long-Acre, with nothing but Leicester Square and Piccadilly ahead, and he never once could find his way home. Wandered about, and would discover at last that he had got into Lincoln's Inn Fields *again* ! He used to tell us sometimes of Ministerial things, not often, nor ever to the kindling of any admiration in either of us, how Lord Althorp would bluffly say etc etc (some very dull piece of bluff candour), more sparingly, what the aspects and likelihoods were in which my too Radical humour but little sympathised. He was often unwell, hidden for a week at Wimbledon Park (Lord Althorp's, and then a beautiful secluded place) for quiet and rural air. We seldom called at Jermyn Street,—but did once, in a damp clammy evening, which I still fondly recollect, ah me !

We were at first rather surprised that Jeffrey did not introduce me to some of his grand literary figures, or try in some way to be of help to one for whom he evidently had a value. The explanation, I think, partly was, That I myself expressed no trace of aspiration that way, that his grand literary or other figures were clearly by no means so adorable to the rustic, hopelessly *Germanised* soul, as an introducer of me might have wished,—and chiefly that in fact Jeffrey did not consort with literary or other grand people, but only with ——s and bores in this bad time, that it was practically the very worst of times for him, and that he was himself so heartily miserable as to think me and his other fellow-creatures happy in comparison, and to have no care left to bestow on us. I never doubted his real

wish to help me, should an opportunity offer, and while it did not, we had no want of him, but plenty of Society, of resources, outlooks, and interests otherwise Truly one might have pitied him, in this his influx of unexpected Dignities,—as I hope I, in silence, loyally, sometimes did So beautiful and radiant a little soul, plunged on the sudden into such a Mother of (*Gilt*) Dead Dogs! But it is often so and many an envied man fares like that mythic Irishman who had resolved on treating himself to a sedan-chair, and on whom the mischievous chairmen, giving one another the wink, *left the bottom open*, and ran away with him, to the sorrow of his poor shins “And that’s your sedan-chair!” said the Irish gentleman, paying his shilling, and satisfied to finish the experiment.

In March or the end of February I set to writing *Johnson*, and, having found a *steady* table (what *fettling*<sup>1</sup> in that poor room, and how kind and beautiful *She* was to me!), I wrote it, by her side for most part, pushing my way through the mud elements, with a certain glow of victory now and then This finished, this and other little objects and arrangements (Jeffrey much in abeyance, to judge by my memory now so blank), we made our adieus (Irving, Badams, Mill, Leigh Hunt, who was a *new* acquaintance, but an interesting), and, by Birmingham, Liverpool, Scotsbrig, with incidents all fresh in mind to me just now, arrived safely home, well pleased with our London sojourn, and feeling our poor life to a certain degree made richer by it Ah me, so strange, so sad, the days that are no more!

<sup>1</sup> A lifting and arranging

Jeffrey's correspondence continued, brisk as ever, but it was now chiefly to Her address, and I regarded it little, feeling, as she too did, that it greatly wanted practicality, and amounted mainly to a flourish of fine words, and the pleasant expenditure now and then of an idle hour, in intervals of worry. My time, with little *Gothic* papers and excerpts (*Das Mahrchen* etc.), printing of *Sartor* piecemeal in *Fraser*, and London correspondings, went more prosperously than heretofore,—had there been *good servants* procurable, as there were *not*, one might almost have called it a happy time, this at Craigenputtock, and it might have lasted longer. But permanent, we both silently felt it could not be,—nor even very lasting, as matters stood. I think it must have been the latter part of next year (1833) when Jeffrey's correspondence with me sputtered out into something of sudden life again,—and something so unlucky that it proved to be, essentially, death instead! The case was this. We heard copiously, in the Newspapers, that the Edinburgh people, in a meritorious scientific spirit, were about remodelling their old Astronomical Observatory, and at length that they had brought it to the proper pitch of real equipment, and that nothing now was wanting but a fit Observer to make it scientifically useful and notable. I had hardly ever looked through a telescope, but I had good strength in Mathematics, in Astronomy, and did not doubt but I could soon be at home in such an enterprise, if I fairly entered on it. My old enthusiasms, I felt too, were not dead, though so long asleep. We were eagerly desirous of some humblest anchorage, in the finance way, among our fellow-creatures,—my heart's



desire, for many years past and coming, was always, To find *any* honest employment by which one might regularly gain one's daily bread ! Often, long after this (while hopelessly writing the *French Revolution*, for example, hopelessly of *money* or other success from it) I thought my case so tragically hard " *Could* learn to do honestly so many things, nearly all the things I have ever seen done, from the making of shoes, up to the engineering of canals, architecture of mansions as palatial as you liked, and perhaps to still higher things of the physical or spiritual kind, *would*, moreover, toil so loyally to do my task right, not wrong,—and am forbidden to try any of them, see the practical world closed against me as with brazen doors, and must stand here, and perish idle !"

In a word, I had got into considerable spirits about that Astronomical employment, fancied myself in the silent midnight interrogating the eternal Stars etc., with something of real geniality,—in addition to financial considerations,—and, after a few days, in the light friendly tone, with modesty and brevity, applied to my Lord Advocate for his countenance as the first or preliminary step of procedure Or perhaps it was virtually in his own appointment? Or perhaps again (for I quite forget), I wrote, rather as inquiring what he would think of me in reference to it? The poor bit of Letter still seems to me unexceptionable, and the answer was prompt and surprising ! Almost or quite by return of post, I got, not a flat refusal only, but an angry, vehement, almost shrill-sounding and scolding one,—as if it had been a crime and an insolence in the like of me to think of such a thing Thing was intended, as I

soon found, for his old Jermyn Street secretary (my taciturn friend, with the blear eyes), and it was indeed a plain inconvenience that the like of me should apply for it, but not a crime or an insolence by any means. "The like of me?" thought I, and my provocation quickly subsided into contempt. For I had, in Edinburgh, a kind of Mathematical reputation withal, and could have expected votes far stronger than Jeffrey's on that subject. But I perceived the thing to be settled, believed withal that the poor Secretary, though blear-eyed when I last saw him, would do well enough (as in effect I understood he did), that his master might have reasons of his own for wishing a provisionary settlement to the poor man,—and that in short I was an outsider, and had nothing to say to all that. By the first post, I accordingly answered, in the old light style, thanking briefly for at least the swift dispatch, affirming the maxim, *bis dat qui cito dat* even in case of *refusal*, and good-humouredly enough leaving the matter to rest on its own basis. Jeffrey returned to it, evidently somewhat in repentant mood (for his tone had really been splenetic, sputtery and improper, poor worried man), but I took no notice and only marked, for my own private behoof, what exiguous resource of practical help for me lay in that quarter, and how, there as elsewhere, the economically useful would always override the sentimental and ornamental. I had internally no kind of anger against my would-be generous friend,—had not he, after all, a kind of gratuitous regard for me, perhaps as much as I for him? Nor was there a diminution of respect, perhaps only a clearer view how little respect

there had been ! My own poor task was abundantly serious, my posture in it solitary, and I felt that silence would be fittest. Then and subsequently I exchanged one or two little Notes of business with Jeffrey, but this, of late autumn 1833, was the last of our sentimental passages, and may be said to have closed what of Correspondence we had in the friendly or effusive strain. For several years more, he continued corresponding with my Wife, and had, I think, to the end a kind of lurking regard to us, willing to show itself. But our own struggle with the world was now become stern and grim, not fitly to be interrupted by these theoretic flourishes of epistolary trumpeting,—and (towards the finale of *French Revolution*, if I recollect) my Dearest also gave him up, and nearly altogether ceased corresponding.

What a finger of Providence, once more, was this of the Edinburgh Observatory, to which, had Jeffrey assented, I should certainly have gone rejoicing ! These things really strike one's heart. The good Lord Advocate, who really was pitiable, and miserably ill off, in his eminent position, showed visible embarrassment at sight of me (in 1834), come to settle in London, without furtherance asked or given, and indeed, on other occasions, seemed to recollect the Astronomical catastrophe, in a way which touched me, and was of generous origin or indication. He was quitting his Lord Advocateship, and returning home to old courses and habits, a solidly wise resolution. He always assiduously called on us, in his subsequent visits to London, and we had our kind thoughts, our pleasant reminis-

cences, and loyal pities of the once brilliant man and friend but he was now practically become little or nothing to us, and had withdrawn, as it were, to the sphere of the Past I have chanced to meet him in a London party, found him curiously exotic I used punctually to call, if passing through Edinburgh, some recollection I have of an evening, perhaps a night, at Craigmaddock, pleasantly hospitable, with Empson (Son-in-law) there, and talk about Dickens, etc Jeffrey was now a Judge, and giving great satisfaction in that Office, "seldom a better Judge," said everybody, his health was weak, and age advancing, but he had escaped his old London miseries, like a sailor from shipwreck, and might now be accounted a lucky man again The last time I saw him was on my return from Glen Trum in Inverness-shire, and my Ashburton visit there (in 1849) he was then, at least for the time, withdrawn from Judging, and was reported very weak in health, his Wife and he, sauntering together for a little exercise on the shore at Newhaven, had stumbled over some cable and both of them fallen and hurt themselves,—his Wife so ill that I did not see her at all Jeffrey I did see, after some delay, and we talked and strolled slowly some hours together, but there was no longer stay possible, such the evident distress and embarrassment Craigmaddock was in I had got breakfast, on very kind terms, from Mrs Empson with Husband and three or four children, Jeffrey himself, on coming down was very kind to me, but sadly weak, much worn away in body, and in mind more thin and sensitive than ever He talked a good deal,

distantly alluding once to our *changed* courses, in a friendly (not a very dextrous way), was throughout friendly, good, but tremulous, thin, almost affecting, in contrast with old times Grown *Lunar* now, not Solar any more! He took me, baggage and all, in his carriage to the railway station, Mrs Empson escorting, and there said Farewell,—for the last time, as it proved Going to the Grange, some three or four months after this, I accidentally learned from some Newspaper or miscellaneous fellow-passenger, as the news of the morning, That Lord Jeffrey at Edinburgh was dead<sup>1</sup> Dull and heavy, somewhere in the Basingstoke localities, the tidings fell on me,—awakening frozen memories not a few He had died, I afterwards heard, with great constancy and firmness, lifted his finger, as if in cheerful encouragement, amid the lamenting loved ones, and silently passed away After that autumn morning at Craigcrook, I have never seen one of those friendly souls, not even the place itself again A few months afterwards Mrs Jeffrey followed her Husband, in a year or two at Haileybury (some East India College where he had an office or presidency), Empson died,<sup>2</sup>—‘correcting proof sheets of the *Edinburgh Review*,’ as appears, ‘while waiting daily for death,’ a most quiet editorial procedure, which I have often thought of! Craigcrook was sold, Mrs Empson with her children vanished mournfully into the dumb distance, and

<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey died at Craigcrook, 26th January 1850, Mrs Jeffrey died at Haileybury, 18th May following.

<sup>2</sup> Professor William Empson died at Haileybury, 10th December 1852, aged 62

all was over there, and a life-scene, once so bright for us and others, had ended, and was gone like a dream

Jeffrey was perhaps at the height of his reputation about 1816, his *Edinburgh Review* a kind of Delphic Oracle, and Voice of the Inspired, for great majorities of what is called the "Intelligent Public", and himself regarded universally as a man of consummate penetration, and the *facile princeps* in the department he had chosen to cultivate and practise. In the half-century that has followed, what a change in all this the fine gold become dim to such a degree, and the Trismegistus hardly now regarded as a *Megas* by any one, or by the generality remembered at all! He may be said to have begun the rash reckless style of criticising everything in Heaven and Earth by appeal to *Molière's Maid*, "Do *you* like it? Don't *you* like it?"—a style which in hands more and more inferior to that sound-hearted old lady and him, has since grown gradually to such immeasurable lengths among us,—and he himself is one of the first that suffers by it. If praise and blame are to be perfected, not in the mouth of Molière's Maid only, but in that of mischievous precocious babes and sucklings, you will arrive at singular judgments by degrees!—Jeffrey was by no means the Supreme in Criticism or in anything else, but it is certain there has no Critic appeared among us since who was worth naming beside him,—and his influence, for good and for evil, in Literature and otherwise, has been very great. "Democracy," the gradual uprise, and rule in all things, of roaring, million-headed, unreflecting, darkly

suffering, darkly sinning "Demos," come to call its old superiors to account, at *its* maddest of tribunals nothing in my time has so forwarded all this as Jeffrey and his once famous *Edinburgh Review* .

He was not deep enough, pious or reverent enough, to have been great in Literature, but he was a man intrinsically of veracity, said nothing without meaning it in some considerable degree, had the quickest perceptions, excellent practical discernment of what lay before him, was in earnest, too, though not "dreadfully in earnest,"—in short was well fitted to set forth that *Edinburgh Review* (at the dull opening of our now so tumultuous Century),—and become *Coryphæus* of his generation in the waste, wide-spreading and incalculable course appointed *it* among the Centuries!—I used to find in him a finer talent than any he has evidenced in writing this was chiefly when he got to speak Scotch, and gave me anecdotes of old Scotch *Braefields*, and vernacular (often enough, but not always, *cynical*) curiosities of that type Which he did with a greatness of *gusto* quite peculiar to the topic, with a fine and deep sense of humour, of real comic mirth, much beyond what was noticeable in him otherwise, not to speak of the perfection of the mimicry, which itself was something I used to think to myself, "Here is a man whom they have kneaded into the shape of an *Edinburgh Reviewer*, and clothed the soul of in Whig formulas, and blue-and-yellow, but he might have been a beautiful Goldoni, too, or something better in that kind, and have given us beautiful *Comedies*, and aerial pictures, true and poetic, of Human Life in a far other way!"

—There was something of Voltaire in him, something even in bodily features those bright-beaming, swift and piercing hazel-eyes, with their accompaniment of rapid keen expressions in the other lineaments of face, resembled one's notion of Voltaire, and in the voice too there was a fine, half-plangent, kind of metallic ringing tone, which used to remind me of what I fancied Voltaire's voice might have been "*voix sombre et majestueuse*," Duvernet calls it. The culture, and respective natal scenes, of the two men had been very different, nor was their *magnitude* of faculty anything like the same,—had their respective *kinds* of it been much more identical than they were. You could not define Jeffrey to be more than a potential Voltaire, say "*Scotch Voltaire*", with about as much reason (which was not very much) as they used in Edinburgh to call old Playfair the "*Scotch D'Alembert*." Our Voltaire too, whatever else might be said of him, was at least worth a large multiple of our D'Alembert! A beautiful little man, the former of these, and a bright island to me, and to mine, in the sea of things, of whom it is now again mournful and painful to take farewell.

[*Finished* at Mentone, this Saturday, 19 January 1867, day bright as June (while all from London to Avignon seems to be choked under snow and frost), other conditions, especially the *internal*, not good, but baddish or bad!]



show under what conditions the *Reminiscences* of Irving and of Jeffrey were written

"Mentone, on the Riviera, 20th January 1867—

I have finished the *Edward Irving* 'Reminiscences', and, yesterday, a short Paper on Jeffrey ditto,—both of them now lie labelled in bottom drawer of the big *Looking-glass* Press of my bedroom. It was *his* connexion with them that chiefly impelled me, both are superficially, ill and poorly done, especially the *latter* but there is something of value for oneself in reawakening the Sleep of the Past, and bringing old years carefully to survey again by our new eyes, a certain solemn tenderness, too, in these two cases, dwells in it for me,—and, in fine, doing anything not wicked is better than doing nothing. I must carefully endeavour to find out some new work for myself,—but as yet am quite at a loss. Unless the forepart of my day is passed in *writing*, I feel too discontented with it, as if it had been *idle* altogether. What *shall* I take to? Perhaps better, with this *head* and *liver* to go into the open air, and consider!

"21st January— This morning I feel dreadfully in want of some *Task* again, and cannot find one. Some minutes past noon, Day rapidly going whether it have a 'task' or none!

"28th January—Whole week spent in writing letters, mostly bad, factitious, hitting wide, and all *involuntary*, which indeed is perhaps the *father* of all their ill qualities! Task being undiscoverable, am about beginning (Paper laid out, all ready) a Quasi-Task, *Reminiscences of Sundry Notable or Noted Persons*"

## *REMINISCENCES OF SUNDRY*

[Begun at Mentone (Alpes Maritimes), Monday,  
28th January 1867]

Many Literary, and one or two Political or otherwise Public Persons, more or less superior to the common run of men [I have met with in my life], but perhaps none of them really great, or worth more than a transient remembrance, loud as the talk about them once may have been, and certainly none of them, what is more to the purpose here, ever vitally interesting or consummately admirable to myself so that if I do, for want of something else to occupy me better, mark down something of what I recollect concerning some of them, who seemed the greatest, or stood the nearest to me, it surely ought to be with extreme brevity! With rapid succinctness (if I can), at all events, with austere candour, and avoidance of anything which I can suspect to be untrue. Perhaps nobody but myself will ever read this,—but that is not infallibly certain—and even in regard to myself, the one possible profit of such a thing is, That it be not false or incorrect in any point, but correspond to the fact in all



over a slashed and well slain foe to us and to mankind for we were all Radicals in heart, Irving and I as much as any of the others, and were not very wise, nor had looked into the *per contra* side. I retract now on many points, on that of "Barabbas" in particular, which example Southey cited, as characteristic of Democracy, greatly to my dissent, till I had much better, and for many years, considered the subject!

That bout of Pamphleteering had brought Southey much nearer me, but had sensibly diminished my esteem of him, and would naturally slacken my desire for further acquaintance. It must have been a year or two later when his *Thalaba*, *Curse of Kehama*, *Joan of Arc*, etc. came into my hands, or some one of them came, which invoked new effort for the others. I recollect the much kindlier and more respectful feeling these awoke in me, which has continued ever since. I much recognised the piety, the gentle deep affection, the reverence for God and man, which reigned in these Pieces, full of soft pity, like the wailings of a mother, and yet with a clang of chivalrous valour finely audible too. One could not help loving such a man,—and yet I rather felt too as if he were a shrillish thin kind of man, the feminine element perhaps considerably predominating and limiting. However, I always afterwards looked out for his Books, new or old, as for a thing of value and, in particular, read his Articles in the *Quarterly*, which were the most accessible productions. In spite of my Radicalism, I found very much in these Toryisms, which was greatly according to my heart, things rare and

worthy, at once pious and true, which were always welcome to me, though I strove to base them on a better ground than his,—his being no eternal or time-defying one, as I could see; and time in fact, in my own case, having already *done* its work there. In this manner our innocently pleasant relation, as writer and written-for, had gone on, without serious shock, though, after *Kehama*, not with much growth in quality or quantity, for perhaps ten years.

It was probably in 1836 or 7,<sup>1</sup> the second or third year after our removal to London, that Henry Taylor, author of *Arzelde* and various similar things, with whom I had made acquaintance, and whose early regard, constant esteem, and readiness to be helpful and friendly, should be among my *memorabilia* of those years, invited me to come to him one evening, and have a little speech with Southey, whom he judged me to be curious about, and to like, perhaps more than I did. Taylor himself, a solid, sound-headed, faithful, but not a well-read or wide-minded man, though of marked veracity, in all senses of that deep-reaching word, and with a fine readiness to apprehend new truth, and stand by it, was in personal intimacy with the "Lake" Sages and Poets, especially with Southey, and considered that, in Wordsworth and the rest of them, was embodied all of pious wisdom that our Age had, and could not doubt but the sight of Southey would be welcome to me. I readily consented to come, none but the three present, Southey to be Taylor's guest at dinner, I to join them after — which was done. Taylor, still little turned of thirty, lived miscel-

lancously about, in bachelor's lodgings, or sometimes for a month or two during "the season" [in the house of his relative, Miss Fenwick] where he could receive guests. In the former I never saw him, nor to the latter did I go but when invited. It was in a quiet ground-floor, of the latter character as I conjectured, somewhere near Downing Street, and looking into St James's Park, that I found Taylor and Southey, with their wine before them, which they hardly seemed to be minding, very quiet this seemed to be, quiet their discourse too, to all which, not sorry at the omen, I quietly joined myself. Southey was a man well up in the fifties,<sup>1</sup> hair gray, not yet hoary, well setting off his fine clear-brown complexion, head and face both smallish, as indeed the figure was *while seated*, features finely cut, eyes, brow, mouth, good in their kind, expressive all, and even vehemently so, but betokening rather keenness than depth either of intellect or character, a serious, human, honest, but sharp almost fierce-looking thin man, with very much of the *militant* in his aspect,—in the eyes especially was legible a mixture of sorrow and of anger, or of angry contempt, as if his indignant fight with the world had not yet ended in victory, but also never should in defeat. A man you were willing to hear speak. We got to talk of Parliament, Public Speaking and the like (perhaps some electioneering then afoot?)—on my mentioning the Candidate at Bristol, with his "I say ditto to Mr Burke!" Southey eagerly added, "Hah, I myself heard that" (had been a boy listening when that was said)! His contempt

<sup>1</sup> Southey (born 1774) was sixty one in 1835

for the existing set of Parliaments was great and fixed, especially for what produced it, the present electoral temper,—though in the future too, except through Parliaments and elections, he seemed to see no hope. He took to repeating in a low, sorrowfully mocking tone, certain verses (I supposed of his own), emphatically in that vein, which seemed to me bitter and exaggerative, not without ingenuity, but exhibiting no trace of genius. Partly in response, or rather as sole articulate response, I asked who had made those verses? Southey answered carelessly, "Praed they say, Praed, I suppose." My notion was, he was merely putting me off, and that the verses were his own, though he disliked confessing to them. A year or two ago, looking into some *review* of a Reprint of Praed's *Works*, I came upon the verses again, among other excerpts of a similar genus, and found that they verily were Praed's. My wonder now was that Southey had charged his memory with the like of them. This Praed was a young MP who had gained distinction at Oxford or Cambridge, as he now spoke and wrote without scruple against the late illustrious *Reform Bill*, and sovereign Reform Doctrine in general, great things were expected of him by his Party, now sitting cowed into silence, and his name was very current in the Newspapers for a few months, till suddenly (soon after this of Southey), the poor young man died,<sup>1</sup> and sank at once into oblivion,—tragical, though not unmerited, nor extraordinary, as I judged from the contents of that late *Reprint*, and Biographical Sketch, by some

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Praed, born 1802, died 1839. His *Works* were published in 1864.

pious and regretful old friend of his That Southey had some of Præd's verses by heart (verses about Hon Mr This moving, say, to abolish Death and the Devil, Hon Mr B, to change, for improvement's sake, the Obliquity of the Ecliptic, etc etc) is perhaps a kind of honour to poor Præd,—whose inexorable fate, cutting short his "career of ambition" in that manner, is perhaps as sad and tragical to me as to another— —After Southey's bit of recitation I think the party must have soon broken up, I recollect nothing more of it, except my astonishment, when Southey at last completely rose from his chair to shake hands he had only half-risen and nodded on my coming in, and all along I had counted him a lean little man, but now he shot suddenly aloft into a lean tall one, all legs, in shape and stature like a pair of tongs,—which peculiarity my surprise doubtless exaggerated to me, but only made it the more notable and entertaining Nothing had happened throughout that was other than moderately pleasant, and I returned home (I conclude) well enough content with my evening Southey's *sensitiveness* I had noticed on this first occasion as one of his characteristic qualities, but was nothing like aware of the extent of it till our next meeting

This was a few evenings afterwards, Taylor giving some dinner, or party, party in honour of his guest,—if dinner I was not at that, but must have undertaken for the evening sequel, as less inconvenient to me, less unwholesome more especially I remember entering, in the same house, but upstairs this time, a pleasant little drawing-room, in





of Coleridge in particular, he had given more rein than was agreeable to parties concerned. I believe I had myself read the Paper on Coleridge, one Paper on him I certainly had, and had been the reverse of tempted by it to look after the others, finding in this, *e.g.*, that "Coleridge had the greatest intellect perhaps ever given to man," but that he wanted, or as good as wanted, common honesty in applying it, which seemed to me a miserable contradiction in terms, and threw light, if not on Coleridge, yet on De Quincey's faculty of judging him or others. In this Paper there were probably withal some domestic details or allusions, to which, as familiar to rumour, I had paid little heed but certainly, of general reverence for Coleridge and his gifts and deeds, I had traced, not deficiency in this Paper but glaring exaggeration, coupled with De Quincean drawbacks, which latter had alone struck Southey with such poignancy. Or perhaps there had been other more criminal Papers which Southey knew of, and not I? In few minutes he let the topic drop, I helping what I could,<sup>1</sup> and seemed to

<sup>1</sup> There is a slight mistake here as to the occasion of this conversation with Southey. Carlyle writes "Went last night (in bad wet weather) to Taylor's to meet Southey, who received me kindly. A lean gray white-headed man, of dusky complexion, unexpectedly tall when he rises, and still *leaner* then. The shallowest chin, prominent snubbed Roman nose, small care-lined brow, huge brush of white-gray hair, on high crown, and projecting on all sides, the most *zeben cut* pair of faint hazel eyes I have ever seen. Our talk was of Dutch Poets (Vondel etc., whom he had read), of Orators, Colonies, Schools, Swift, Sterne, Berkeley, Burke all in the touch and go way. A well-read, honest, limited (strait-laced even), kindly hearted, most irritable man. We parted kindly, with no great purpose on either side, I imagine, to meet again. De Quincey was mentioned in answer to a question of

feel as if he had done a little wrong, and was bound to show himself more than usually amiable and social, especially with me, for the rest of the evening, which he did in effect,—though I quite forget the details, only that I had a good deal of talk with him, in the circle of the others, and had again more than once to notice the singular readiness of the *blushes*,—amiable *red* blush, beautiful like a young girl's, when you touched genially the pleasant theme, and serpent-like flash of *blue* or black blush (this far, very far the *rarer* kind, though it did recur, too), when you struck upon the opposite. All details of the evening, except that primary one, are clean gone, but the effect was interesting, pleasantly stimulating and surprising. I said to myself, "How has this man contrived, with such a nervous-system, to keep alive for near sixty years? Now blushing, under his gray hairs, rosy like a maiden of fifteen, now *slaty* almost, like a rattle-snake, or fiery serpent? How has he not been torn to pieces long since, under such furious pulling this way and that? He must have somewhere a great deal of methodic virtue in him, I suppose, too, his heart is thoroughly honest, which helps considerably!" I didn't fancy myself

mine. 'Yes I do know him,' answered Southey, 'and know him to be a great rascal and, if you have opportunity, I will thank you to tell him so.' his brown dun face was overspread suddenly almost with black. I 'trusted' in return that 'Some other than I might be the bearer of that comfortable message, as I had no intercourse with De Quincey, and had not seen him for seven years.' The fault was some stuff poor De Quincey had been writing in *Tait's Magazine* about Coleridge. I got the thing at last wound up with a hearty laugh—Southey believes in the Church of England this is notable, notabler (and honourable) that he has made such belief serve him so well"—*Carlyle's Journal*, 26th February 1835

to have made personally the least impression on Southey, but, on those terms, I accepted him for a loyal kind of man, and was content and thankful to know of his existing in the world, near me or still far from me, as the Fates should have determined.

For perhaps two years I saw no more of him, heard only, from Taylor in particular, that he was overwhelmed in misery, and imprudently refusing to yield, or screen himself in any particular,—imprudently, thought Taylor and his other friends. For not only had he been, for several continuous years, toiling and fagging at a *Collective Edition* of his Works, which cost him a great deal of incessant labour, but, far worse, his poor Wife had sunk into insanity, and moreover he would not, such his feeling on the tragic matter, be persuaded to send her to an asylum, or trust her out of his own sight and keeping! Figure such a scene, and what the most sensitive of mankind must have felt under it. This, then, is the gailand and crown of "victory" provided for an old man, when he arrives, spent with his fifty years of climbing and of running, and has what you call *won* the race?—

It was after I had finished the *French Revolution*, and perhaps after my Annandale journey to recover from this adventure, that I heard of Southey's being in Town again. His *Collective Edition* was complete, his poor Wife was dead and at rest,<sup>1</sup> his work was done, in fact (had he known it) all his work in the world was done,—and he had determined on a few weeks of wandering, and trying to repose and recreate himself, among old friends and scenes. I

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Southey died 1837

saw him twice or thrice on this occasion it was our second and last piece of intercourse, and much the more interesting,—to me at least, and for a reason that will appear. My wild excitation of nerves, after finishing that grim Book on *French Revolution*, was something strange. The desperate nature of our circumstances and outlooks while writing it, the thorough possession it had taken of me, dwelling in me day and night, keeping me in constant fellowship with such a "fiamy cut-throat scene of things," infernal and celestial both in one, with no fixed prospect but that of writing it, though I should die,—had held me in a fever-blaze for three years long, and now the blaze had ceased, problem *taliter qualiter* was actually done, and my humour and way of thought about all things was of an altogether ghastly, dim-smouldering, and as if preternatural sort. I well remember that ten-minutes' survey I had of Annan and its vicinity, the forenoon after my landing there. Brother Alick must have met me at the Steamboat Harbour, I suppose, at any rate we were walking towards Scotsbrig together, and at Mount-Annan<sup>1</sup> Gate, bottom of Landheads Hamlet, he had left me for a moment till he called somewhere, I stood leaning against a stone or milestone, face towards Annan, of which with the two miles of variegated cheerful green slope that intervened, and then of the So way Firth far and wide, from Gretna to St Bees Head, and beyond it, of the grand and one; Cumbrian mountains, with Helvellyn and Craven in Ingelborough in the rearward there was

<sup>1</sup> The name of General Dixon. Carle had been true to his sons.

magnificent view well known to me Stone itself was well known to me this had been my road to Annan School from my tenth year onward, right sharp was my knowledge of every item in this scene, thousandfold my memories connected with it, and mournful and painful, rather than joyful, too many of them! And now here it was again, and here was I again Words cannot utter the wild and ghastly expressiveness of that scene to me, it seemed as if Hades itself and the gloomy Realms of Death and Eternity were looking out on me through those poor old familiar objects, as if no miracle could be more miraculous than this same bit of Space and bit of Time spread out before me I felt withal how wretchedly unwell I must be, and was glad, no doubt, when Alick returned, and we took the road again What precedes and what follows this clear bit of memory, are alike gone but for seven or more weeks after, I rode often down and up this same road, silent, solitary, weird of mood, to bathe in the Solway, and not even my dear old Mother's love and cheery helpfulness (for she was then still strong for her age) could raise my spirits out of utter grimness, and fixed contemptuous disbelief in the future. Hope of having succeeded, of ever succeeding, I had not the faintest,—was not even at the pains to wish it, said only in a dim mute way, "Very well, then, be it just so, then!" A foolish young neighbour, not an ill-disposed, sent me a Number of the *Athenæum* (Literary Journal of the day) in which I was placidly, with some elaboration, set down as blockhead and strenuous failure the last words were, "Readers, have we made out our

case? I read it without pain or pain the least to signify I laid it aside for a day or two: then one morning, in some strait about our breakfast tea-kettle, slipped the peccant Number under that, and had my cup of excellent hot tea from it. The foolish neighbour, who was "filing the *Millium*" (more power to him!) found a *lacina* in his set at this point, might know better another time, it was hoped! Thackeray's laudation in the *Times*, I also recollect the arrival of (how pathetic now *Her* mirth over it to me!)—but neither did Thackeray inspire me with any emotion still less with any ray of exultation. "One other poor judge voting I said to myself, 'but what is he, or such as he?' The fate of that thing is *fixed*! I have written it, that is all my result." Nothing now strikes me as affecting in all this but *Her* noble attempt to cheer me on my return home to her, still sick and sad and how she poured out on me her melodious joy and all her bits of confirmatory anecdotes and narratives, "Oh it has had a great success, Dear!"—and not even she could irradiate my darkness, beautifully as she tried for a long time, as I sat at her feet again by our own parlour-fire. "Ah, you are an unbelieving creature!" said she at last, starting up, probably to give me some tea. There was, and is, in all this something heavenly,—the rest is all of it smoke, and has gone up the chimney, inferior in benefit and quality to what my pipe yielded me. I was rich once, had I known it, very rich and now I am become poor to the end.

Such being my posture and humour at that time, fancy my surprise at finding Southey full of sym-

pathy, assent, and recognition of the amplest kind, for my poor new Book! We talked largely on the huge Event itself, which he had dwelt with openly or privately ever since his youth, and tended to interpret exactly as I,—the suicidal explosion of an old wicked world, too wicked, false and impious for living longer,—and seemed gratified, and as if grateful, that a strong voice had at last expressed that meaning. My poor *French Revolution* evidently appeared to him a Good Deed, a salutary bit of "scriptural" exposition for the public and for mankind, and this, I could perceive, was the soul of a great many minor approbations and admirations of detail, which he was too polite to speak of. As Southey was the only man of eminence that had ever taken such a view of me, and especially of this my first considerable Book, it seems strange that I should have felt so little real triumph in it as I did. For all other eminent men, in regard to all my Books and Writings hitherto, and most of all in regard to this latest, had stood pointedly silent, dubitative, disapprobatory, many of them shaking their heads. Thus, when poor *Santor* got passed through *Fraser*, and was done up from the *Fraser* types as a separate thing, perhaps about fifty copies being struck off,—I sent six copies to six Edinburgh Literary Friends, from not one of whom did I get the smallest whisper even of receipt,—a thing disappointing more or less to human nature, and which has silently and insensibly led me, Never since to send any copy of a book to Edinburgh, or indeed to Scotland at all, except to my own kindred there, and in one or two specific



unliterary cases more    The *Plébs* of Literature might be divided in their verdicts about me (though, by count of heads, I always suspect the "*Guilties*" clean had it), but the Conscript Fathers declined to vote at all. And yet here was a Conscript Father voting in a very pregnant manner, and it seems I felt but little joy even in that! Truly I can say for myself, Southey's approbation, though very privately I doubtless had my pride in it, did not the least tend to swell me,—though on the other hand, I must own to very great gloom of mind, sullen some part of it, which is possibly a worse fault than what it saved me from. I remember now how polite and delicate his praises of me were, never given direct or in over-measure, but always obliquely, in the way of hint or inference left for me, and how kind, sincere and courteous, his manner throughout was. Our mutual considerations about French Revolution, about its incidents, catastrophes, or about its characters, Danton, Camille, etc., and contrasts and comparisons of them with their (probable) English congeners of the day,—yielded pleasant and copious material for dialogue when we met. Literature was hardly touched upon, our discourse came almost always upon moral and social topics. Southey's look, I remarked, was strangely careworn, anxious, though he seemed to like talking, and both talked and listened well, his eyes especially were as if full of gloomy bewilderment and incurable sorrow. He had got to be about sixty-three, had buried all his suffering loved ones, wound up forty years of incessant, vehement labour, much of it more or less ungenial to him, and in fact, though he knew it

not, had finished his work in the world, and might well be looking back on it with a kind of ghastly astonishment rather than with triumph or joy!—

I forget how often we met, it was not very often, it was always at H. Taylor's, or through Taylor<sup>1</sup>. One day, for the first and last time, he made us a visit at Chelsea, a certain old Lady-cousin of Taylor's [whose guest Taylor sometimes was] for a month or two in the Town Season, a Miss Fenwick, of provincial accent and type, but very wise, discreet and well-bred,—had come driving down with him. Their arrival, and loud-thundering knock at the door, is very memorable to me,—the moment being unusually critical in our poor household! My little Jeannie was in hands with the *marmalade* that day—none ever made such marmalade for me, pure as liquid amber, in taste and in look almost *poetically* delicate, and it was the only one of her pretty and industrious confitures that I individually cared for, which made her doubly diligent and punctual about it. (Ah me, ah me!)—The kitchen fire, I suppose, had not been brisk enough, free enough, so she had had the large brass pan and contents brought up to the brisker parlour-fire, and was there victoriously boiling it,—when it boiled over, in huge blaze, set the chimney on fire,—and I (from my writing upstairs, I suppose) had been suddenly summoned to the rescue. What

<sup>1</sup> "Saw Southey, once here, another time at Miss Fenwick's, very kind to me, and fond of talking, especially about French Revolution, book and thing. The excitablest man I ever saw. Very strange that I should be a *toleratus*, & *laudatus* with him"—Carlyle's *Journal*, 13th April 1838

a moment, what an outlook! The kindling of the chimney-soot was itself a grave matter, involving fine of £10, if the fire-engines had to come. My first and immediate step was to parry this, by at once letting down the grate-valve, and cutting quite off the supply of oxygen or atmosphere, which of course was effectual, though at the expense of a little smoke in the room meanwhile. The brass pan, and remaining contents (not much wasted or injured) she had herself snatched off and set on the hearth, I was pulling down the back-window, which would have completed the temporary settlement,—when, hardly three yards from us, broke out the thundering door-knocker, and before the brass pan could be got away, Miss Fenwick and Southey were let in. Southey I don't think my Darling had yet seen, but her own fine modest composure, and presence of mind, never in any other greatest *presence*, forsook her. I remember how daintily she made the salutations, brief quizzical bit of explanation, got the wreck to vanish, and sat down as member of our little party. Southey and I were on the sofa together, she nearer Miss Fenwick, for a little of feminine “*aside*” now and then the colloquy did not last long,—I recollect no point of it, except that Southey and I got to speaking about Shelley (whom perhaps I remembered to have lived in the Lake Country for some time, and had started on Shelley as a practicable topic). Southey did not rise into admiration of Shelley either for talent or conduct, spoke of him and his Life, without bitterness, but with contemptuous sorrow, and evident aversion mingled with his pity. To me also poor

Shelley always was, and is, a kind of ghastly object, colourless, pallid, tuneless, without health or warmth of vigour, the sound of him shrieky, frosty, as if a *ghost* were trying to "sing" to us, the temperament of him, spasmodic, hysterical, instead of strong or robust, with fine affections and aspirations, gone all such a road—a man infinitely too *weak* for that solitary scaling of the Alps which he undertook in spite of all the world. At some point of the dialogue I said to Southey, "A haggard existence that of his" I remember Southey's pause, and the tone and air with which he answered, "It is a haggard existence!" His look, at this moment, was unusually gloomy and heavy-laden, full of confused distress,—as if in retrospect of his own existence, and the haggard battle it too had been!—

He was now about sixty-[four], his work all done, but his heart as if broken—a certain Miss Bowles, given to scribbling, with its affectations, its sentimentalities, and perhaps twenty years younger than he,<sup>1</sup> had (as I afterwards understood) heroically *volunteered* to marry him, "for the purpose of consoling," etc, etc, to which he heroically had assented, and was now on the road towards Bristol, or the western region where Miss Bowles lived, for completing that poor hope of his and hers. A second wedlock, in what contrast almost dismal, almost horrible, with a former there had been! Far away that former one, but it had been illuminated by the hopes and radiances of very Heaven, this second one was to be celebrated under sepulchral lamps, and as if in the forecourt of the charnel-house!

<sup>1</sup> Miss Bowles was 16½ years younger than Southey

Southey's deep misery of aspect I should have better understood, had this been known to me, but it was known to Taylor alone, who kept it locked from everybody

The last time I saw Southey was on an evening at Taylor's, nobody there but myself, I think he meant to leave Town next morning, and had wished to say farewell to me first. We sat on the sofa together, our talk was long and earnest, topic ultimately the usual one, steady approach of democracy, with revolution (probably *explosive*), and a *finis* incomputable to man, — steady decay of all morality, political, social, individual, this once noble England getting more and more ignoble and untrue in every fibre of it, till the *gold* (see Goethe's *Composite King*) would *all* be eaten out, and noble England would have to collapse in shapeless ruin, whether *forever* or not none of us could know. Our perfect consent on these matters gave an animation to the Dialogue, which I remember as copious and pleasant. Southey's last word was in answer to some tirade of mine about universal Mammon-worship, gradual accelerating decay of mutual humanity, of piety and fidelity to God or man, in all our relations and performances,—the whole illustrated by examples, I suppose, — to which he answered, not with levity, yet with a cheerful tone in his seriousness, "It will not, and it cannot come to good!" This he spoke standing, I had risen, checking my tirade, intimating that, alas, I must go. He invited me to Cumberland, to "see the Lakes again", and added, "Let us know beforehand, that the rites of hospitality—" I had

already shaken hands, and now answered from beyond the door of the apartment, "Ah, yes, thanks, thanks!" little thinking that it was my last farewell of Southey

He went to the Western Country, got wedded,<sup>1</sup> went back to Keswick, and I heard once or so some shallow jest about his promptitude in wedding - but before long, the news came, first in whispers, then public and undeniable, that his mind was going or gone, memory quite, and the rest hopelessly following it. The new Mrs Southey had not succeeded in "consoling and comforting" him, but far the reverse. We understood afterwards that the grown-up Daughters and their Stepmother "had agreed ill," that perhaps neither they nor she were very wise, nor the arrangement itself very wise or well-contrived. *Better* perhaps that poor Southey was veiled from it, shrouded away in curtains of his own, and deaf to all discords henceforth! We heard of him from Miss Fenwick now and then (I think for a year or two more) till the end came - he was usually altogether placid and quiet, without memory, more and more without thought. One day they had tried him with some fine bit of his own Poetry - he woke into beautiful consciousness, eyes and features shining with their old brightness (and perhaps a few words of rational speech coming), but it lasted only some minutes, till all lapsed into the old blank again. By degrees all intellect had melted away from him, and quietly unconsciously he died<sup>2</sup>. There was little noise in the public on this occurrence, nor could his private

<sup>1</sup> 4th June 1830.

<sup>2</sup> 21st March 1843

friends do other than, in silence, mournfully yet almost gratefully acquiesce. There came out by and by *two* Lives of him, one by his widow, one by his son (such the family discrepancies, happily *inaudible* where they would have cut sharpest), neither of these books did I look into

Southey I used to construe to myself as a man of slight build, but of sound and elegant, with considerable genius in him, considerable faculty of *speed* and rhythmic insight, and with a morality that shone distinguished among his contemporaries. I reckoned him (with those *blue* blushes and those red) to be the perhaps excitablest of all men, and that a deep mute monition of Conscience had spoken to him, "You are capable of running mad, if you don't take care. Acquire *habitudes*, stick firm as adamant to them at all times, and work, continually work!" This, for thirty or forty years, he had punctually and impetuously done,—no man so *habitual*, we were told, gave up his Poetry, at a given hour, on stroke of the clock, and took to Prose, etc etc, and, as to diligence and velocity, employed his very walking hours, walked with a Book in his hand,—and by these methods of his, had got through perhaps a greater amount of work, counting quantity and quality, than any other man whatever in those years of his,—till all suddenly ended. I likened him to one of those huge sandstone grinding-cylinders which I had seen at Manchester, turning with inconceivable velocity (in the condemned room of the Iron Factory, where "the men die of lung disease at forty," but are *permitted to smoke* in their damp cellar, and think that a rich recompense!)—with inconceivable velocity

turn those huge grinding-stones, screaming harshly victorious, harshly glad, and shooting out, each of them, its big sheet of fire (*yellow*, star-light, etc according as it is *brass* or other kind of metal that you grind and polish there)—beautiful sheets of fire, pouring out each as if from the paper-cap of its low-stooping fated grinder, when you look from rearward—for many years these stones grind so, at such a rate, till at last (in some cases) comes a moment when the stone's cohesion is quite worn-out, overcome by the stupendous velocity long-continued, and, while grinding its fastest, it flies off altogether, and settles some yards from you, a grinding-stone no longer, but a cartload of quiet sand—[Finished at Mentone, 8th February 1867]

[WORDSWORTH<sup>1</sup>]

Of Wordsworth I have little to write that could ever be of use to myself or others. I did not see him much, or till latish in my course see him at all; nor did we deeply admire one another at any time. Of me in my first times he had little knowledge, and any feeling he had towards me, I suspect, was

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, when beginning this Paper, writes in his *Journal*, under date 3d March 1867:—"Fallen into a sad abeyance; caught a bad cold etc., incapable of anything which even I can call 'work,' for two weeks past,—cannot even touch upon the poor bubble about Wordsworth (till to-day with effort)—am, in brief, *lethargic*, not equal to the petty complexities of my situation, and for most part incapable, almost, oftenest sad as the great *Pope*, sadness of that kind, when it comes *pure*, is in fact my tolerablest mood; all bitterness and all content then taken away!—Shall spare but been my common reading; for the rest for me I can fill upon here."



largely blended with abhorrence and perhaps a kind of fear. His works I knew, but never considerably revered,—could not, on attempting it. A man recognisably of strong intellectual powers, strong character, given to meditation, and much contemptuous of the unmeditative world and its noisy nothingnesses. Had a fine limpid style of writing and delineating, in his small way; a fine limpid vein of melody too in him (as of an honest rustic *fiddler*, good and well handled, but *strutting* two or more of the *strings*, and not capable of much!)—in fact, a rather dull, hard-tempered, unproductive and almost wearisome kind of man; not adorable, by any means, as a great Poetic Genius, much less as the Trismegistus of such whom only a select few could even read, instead of mis-reading, which was the opinion his worshippers confidently entertained of him! Privately I had a real respect for him withal, founded on his early Biography, which Wilson of Edinburgh had painted to me as of antique greatness signifying “Poverty and Peasanthood, then, be it so. But we consecrate ourselves to the Muses, all the same, and will proceed on those terms, Heaven aiding!” This, and what of faculty I did recognise in the man, gave me a clear esteem of him, as of one remarkable and fairly beyond common,—not to disturb which, I avoided speaking of him to his worshippers or, if the topic turned up, would listen with an acquiescing air. But to my private self his divine reflections and unfathomabilities seemed stunted, scanty, palish and uncertain,—perhaps in part a feeble *reflex* (derived at second hand through Coleridge) of the immense German fund of such—

and I reckoned his Poetic Storehouse to be far from an opulent or well furnished apartment !

It was perhaps about 1840 that I first had any decisive meeting with Wordsworth, or made any really personal acquaintance with him<sup>1</sup> In parties at Taylor's I may have seen him before, but we had no speech together, nor did we specially notice one another—one such time I do remember (probably *before*, as it was in my earlier days of Sterling acquaintanceship, when Sterling used to argue much with me), Wordsworth sat silent, almost next to me, while Sterling took to asserting the claims of Kotzebue as a Dramatist ("recommended even by Goethe," as he likewise urged), whom I with pleasure did my endeavour to explode from that mad notion,—and thought (as I still recollect), "This will perhaps please Wordsworth, too," who, however, gave not the least sign of that or any other feeling I had various dialogues with him in that same room, but these, I judge, were all or mostly of after date.

On a summer morning (let us call it 1840, then) I was apprised by Taylor that Wordsworth had come to Town, and would meet a small party of us at a certain Tavern in St. James's Street, at breakfast,—to which I was invited for the given day and hour We had a pretty little room, quiet, though looking street-ward (Tavern's *name* is quite lost to me), the morning sun was pleasantly tinting the opposite houses, a balmy, calm and bright morning, Wordsworth, I think, arrived just along with me,

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle notes in his *Journal*, under date 1st June 1836, that he has "seen Wordsworth again."

we had still five minutes of sauntering and miscellaneous talking before the whole were assembled. I do not positively remember any of them except that James Spedding was there; and that the others, not above five or six in whole, were polite intelligent quiet persons, and, except Taylor and Wordsworth not of any special distinction in the world. Breakfast was pleasant, fairly beyond the common of such things, Wordsworth seemed in good tone, and much to Taylor's satisfaction, talked a great deal about "poetic" Correspondents of his own (i.e. correspondents for the sake of *his* Poetry,—especially, one such who had sent him from Canton, an excellent *Chast of Tea*, correspondent grinningly applauded by us all); then about ruralities and miscellanies, "Countess of Pembroke" (antique She-Clifford, glory of those Northern parts, who was not new to any of us, but was set forth by Wordsworth with gusto and brief emphasis, "You lily-livered" etc.) now the only memorable item under that head these were the first topics. Then finally about *Literature*, literary laws, practices, observances,—at considerable length and turning wholly on the mechanical part, including even a good deal of shallow enough *etiology*, from me and others which was well received on all this Wordsworth enlarged with evident satisfaction and was joyfully reverent of the "wells of English undefiled,"—though stone *around* as to the deeper rules, and wells of Eternal Truth and Harmony you were to try and set forth by said undefiled wells of *Engl's* or what other Speech you had. To me a little disappointing but not much,—though it would have given me



“marches,” and do battle with the intrusive Heathen, in a stalwart and judicious manner

On this and other occasional visits of his, I saw Wordsworth a number of times, at dinners, in evening parties, and we grew a little more familiar, but without much increase of real intimacy or affection springing up between us. He was willing to talk with me in a corner, in noisy extensive circles, having weak eyes, and little loving the general babble current in such places. One evening, probably about this time, I got him upon the subject of great poets, who I thought might be admirable equally to us both, but was rather mistaken, as I gradually found. Pope's partial failure I was prepared for, less for the narrowish limits visible in Milton and others. I tried him with Burns, of whom he had sung tender recognition, but Burns also turned out to be a limited inferior creature, any genius he had a theme for one's pathos rather, even Shakspeare himself had his blind sides, his limitations —gradually it became apparent to me that of transcendent and unlimited there was, to this Critic, probably but one specimen known, Wordsworth himself! He by no means said so, or hinted so, in words, but on the whole it was all I gathered from him in this considerable *tête-à-tête* of ours, and it was not an agreeable conquest. New notion as to Poetry or Poet I had not in the smallest degree got, but my insight into the depths of Wordsworth's pride in himself had considerably augmented, —and it did not increase my love of him, though I did [not] in the least hate it either, so quiet was it, so fixed, *unappealing*, like a dim old lichened crag on

the wayside, the private meaning of which, in contrast with any public meaning it had, you recognised with a kind of not wholly melancholy *glimpse* —

Another and better corner dialogue I afterwards had with him, possibly also about this time, which raised him intellectually some real degrees higher in my estimation than any of his deliverances written or oral had ever done, and which I may reckon as the best of all his discoursings or dialogues with me. He had withdrawn to a corner, out of the light and of the general babble, as usual with him, I joined him there, and knowing how little fruitful was the Literary topic between us, set him on giving me account of the notable practicalities he had seen in life, especially of the notable men. He went into all this with a certain alacrity, and was willing to speak, wherever able on the terms. He had been in France in the earlier or secondary stage of the Revolution, had witnessed the struggle of *Girondeins* and *Mountain*, in particular the execution of Gorsas, "the first *Deputy* sent to the Scaffold," and testified strongly to the ominous feeling which that event produced in everybody, and of which he himself still seemed to retain something. "Where will it *end*, when you have set an example in *this* kind?" I knew well about Gorsas, but had found, in my readings, no trace of the public emotion his death excited, and perceived now that Wordsworth might be taken as a true supplement to my Book, on this small point. He did not otherwise add to or alter my ideas on the Revolution nor did we dwell long there, but hastened over to England and to the noteworthy, or at least noted men of that and the subsequent time. "Noted"

and named, I ought perhaps to say, rather than "noteworthy", for in general I forget what men they were, and now remember only the excellent sagacity, distinctness and credibility of Wordsworth's little Biographic Portraits of them. Never, or never but once, had I seen a stronger intellect, a more luminous and veracious power of insight, directed upon such a survey of fellow-men and their contemporary journey through the world. A great deal of Wordsworth lay in the mode and tone of drawing, but you perceived it to be faithful, accurate, and altogether life-like, though Wordsworthian. One of the best remembered Sketches (almost the only one now remembered at all) was that of Wilberforce, the famous Nigger-Philanthropist, Drawing-room Christian, and busy man and Politician. In all "high capacities Wordsworth's esteem of him seemed to be privately as small as my own private one, and was amusing to gather. No hard word of him did he speak or hint, told, in brief firm business terms, how he was born at or near the place called *Wilberforce* in Yorkshire ("force" signifying torrent or angry brook, I suppose, as in Cumberland?), where, probably, his forefathers may have been possessors, though he was poorish, how he did this and that, of insignificant (to Wordsworth, insignificant) nature,—“and then,” added Wordsworth, “he took into the *Oil* trade” (I suppose the Hull whaling), which lively phrase, and the incomparable historical tone it was given in “*the Oil Trade*,” as a thing perfectly natural, and proper for such a man,—is almost the only point in the description which is now vividly present to me. I remember only the rustic Picture, sketched as with a

burnt stick on the board of a pair of bellows, seemed  
 to me completely good, and that the general effect  
 was, one *saw* the great Wilberforce and his existence,  
 visible in all their main lineaments,—but only as  
 through the *reversed* telescope, and reduced to the  
 size of a mouse and its nest, or little more! This  
 was, in most or in all cases, the result brought out,  
 oneself and telescope of natural (or perhaps preter-  
 natural) size, but the object, so great to vulgar eyes,  
*reduced* amazingly, with all its lineaments recog-  
 nisable I found a very superior talent in these  
 Wordsworth delineations They might have re-  
 minded me, though I know not whether they did at  
 the time, of a larger series like them, which I had  
 from my Father during two wet days which confined  
 us to the house, the last time we met at Scotsbrig!  
 These were of select Annandale Figures whom I had  
 seen in my Boyhood, and of whom, now that they  
 were all vanished, I was glad to have, for the first  
 time, some real knowledge as facts, the outer *simul-*  
*acra* in all their equipments, being still so pathetically  
 vivid to me My Father's, in rugged simple force,  
 picturesque ingenuity, veracity and brevity, were, I  
 do judge, superior to even Wordsworth's, as bits of  
 human Portraiture, *without* flavour of contempt, too,  
 but given out with judicial indifference,—and inter-  
 mixed here and there with flashes of the *Poetical* and  
 soberly Pathetic (e.g. the death of Bell of Dunnaby,  
 and *why* the two joiners were seen sawing wood in a  
 pour of rain), which the Wordsworth Sketches, mainly  
 of distant and indifferent persons, altogether wanted  
 Oh my brave, dear, and ever-honoured Peasant  
 Father, where among the Grandees, Sages, and re-



cognised Poets of the world, did I listen to such sterling speech as yours,—golden product of a heart and brain all sterling and royal! That is a literal *fact*,—and it has often filled me with strange reflections, in the whirlpools of this mad world!

During the last seven or ten years of his life, Wordsworth felt himself to be a recognised lion, in certain considerable London Circles, and was in the habit of coming up to Town with his Wife for a month or two every season, to enjoy his quiet triumph and collect his bits of tribute *tales quales*. The places where I met him oftenest, were Marshall's (the great Leeds linen-manufacturer, an excellent and very opulent man), Spring-Rice's (i.e. Lord Monteagle's, who and whose house was strangely intermarried with this Marshall's), and the *first* Lord Stanley's of Alderley (who then, perhaps, was still Sir Thomas Stanley). Wordsworth took his bit of lionism very quietly, with a smile sardonic rather than triumphant, and certainly got no harm by it, if he got or expected little good. His Wife, a small, withered, puckered, winking lady, who never spoke, seemed to be more in earnest about the affair,—and was visibly and sometimes ridiculously assiduous to secure her proper place of precedence at Table<sup>1</sup>. One evening at Lord Monteagle's—Ah, *who* was it that then made me laugh as we went home together all me!— —Wordsworth generally spoke a little with me on those occasions, sometimes, perhaps, we sat by

<sup>1</sup> According to Sir Henry Taylor, Mrs Wordsworth was "rather tall," and was in all respects so unlike this description that he says "I cannot but think there was simply a mistake of one person for another"  
—*Nineteenth Century* for June 1881

one another, but there came from him nothing considerable, and happily at least nothing with an effort "If you think me dull, be it just so!" this seemed to a most respectable extent to be his inspiring humour. Hardly above once (perhaps at the Stanleys') do I faintly recollect something of the contrary on his part for a little while, which was not pleasant or successful while it lasted. The light was always afflictive to his eyes, he carried in his pocket something like a skeleton brass candlestick, in which, setting it on the dinner-table, between him and the most afflictive or nearest of the chief lights, he touched a little spring, and there flitted out, at the top of his brass implement, a small vertical green circle, which prettily enough threw his eyes into shade, and screened him from that sorrow. In proof of his equanimity as long I remember, in connection with this green shade, one little glimpse, which shall be given presently as *finis*. But first let me say that all these Wordsworth phenomena appear to have been indifferent to [me], and have melted to steamy oblivion, in a singular degree. Of his talk to others in my hearing I remember simply nothing, not even a word or gesture. To myself it seemed once or twice as if he bore suspicions, thinking I was *not* a real worshipper, which threw him into something of embarrassment, till I hastened to get them laid, by frank discourse on some suitable thing (in the Stanley Drawing-room, I remember, he hit a stool, and kicked it over in striding forward to shake hands),—nor, when we did talk, was there on his side or on mine the least utterance worth noting. The tone of his voice when I did get him afloat, on some Cumber-

land or other matter germane to him, had a braced rustic vivacity, willingness, and solid precision, which alone rings in my ear when all else is gone. Of some Druid Circle, for example, he prolonged his response to me with the addition, "And there is another, some miles off, which the country people call *Long MEG and her DAUGHTERS*," as to the now ownership of which, "It" etc, "*and then* it came into the hands of a Mr Crackenthorpe,"—the *sound* of these two phrases is still lively and present with me, meaning or sound of absolutely nothing more. Still more memorable is an ocular glimpse I had in one of these Wordsworthian lion-dinners, very symbolic to me of his general deportment there, and far clearer than the little feature of opposite sort, ambiguously given above (recollection of that viz of unsuccessful *exertion* at a Stanley Dinner being dubious and all but extinct, while this is still vivid to me as of yesternight). Dinner was large, luminous, sumptuous, I sat a long way from Wordsworth, dessert I think had come in, and certainly there reigned in all quarters a cackle as of Babel (only politer perhaps),—which far up, in Wordsworth's quarter (who was leftward on my side of the table), seemed to have taken a sententious, rather louder, logical and quasi-scientific turn,—heartily unimportant to gods and men, so far as I could judge of it and of the other babble reigning. I looked upwards, leftwards, the coast luckily being for a moment clear there, far off, beautifully screened in the shadow of his vertical green circle, which was on the farther side of him, sat Wordsworth, silent, in rock-like indifference, slowly but steadily gnawing some portion of what I

judged to be raisins, with his eye and attention placidly fixed on these and these alone. The sight of whom, and of his rock-like indifference to the babble, quasi-scientific and other, with attention turned on the small practical alone, was comfortable and amusing to me, who felt like him but could not eat raisins. This little glimpse I could still paint, so clear and bright is it, and this shall be symbolical of all.

In a few years, I forget in how many or when, these Wordsworth Appearances in London ceased, we heard, not of ill-health perhaps, but of increasing love of rest, at length of the long Sleep's coming, and never saw Wordsworth more<sup>1</sup>. One felt his death as the extinction of a public light, but not otherwise. The public itself found not much to say of him, and staggered on to meaner but more pressing objects — — Why should I continue these melancholy jottings in which I have no interest, in which the one Figure that could interest me is almost wanting? I will cease. [Finished, after many miserable interruptions, catarrhal and other, at Mentone, 5th March 1867.]

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On the same day Carlyle writes in his *Journal*

"Finished the rag on Wordsworth to the last tatter, won't begin another. *Cui bono*, it is wearisome and naught even to myself. I live mostly alone, with vanished Shadows of the Past,—many of them rise for a moment, inexpressibly tender,

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth died 23d April 1850

One is never long absent from me    Gone, gone, but very dear, very beautiful and dear!    ETERNITY, which cannot be far off, is my one strong city    I look into it fixedly now and then, all terrors about it seem to me superfluous, all knowledge about it, any the least glimmer of certain knowledge, impossible to living mortal    The universe is full of love, and also of inexorable sternness and veracity    and it remains for ever true that 'GOD reigns'    Patience, silence, hope!"

# INDEX

- ADVOCATE morality, II 229  
 Airy, Professor, II 153 5  
 Aitken, Mary Carlyle, I 270, 275, 277  
 Annan School, II 16  
 Argyll, Duke of, II 37, 50  
 Aristocracy, certain of the, still really noble, I 117, 118 *note*, gatherings of the choicest at Bath House, 128  
 Arundell, Mr Hunter, I 83 *note*  
 Ashburton, Lady (Lady Harriet Baring), I 118 9, railway journey to Edinburgh, 205  
 Ashburton, Lord, extract from his letter to Carlyle on Lady Ashburton's death, I 119 *note*, mentioned also, 211  
 Ashburton, Louisa, Lady, 'kindness itself' to Mrs Carlyle, I 238, mentioned also, 276, II 196  
 Auldgarth Bridge, I 35 7  
 Austin, Mrs, I 172, II 211  
 BADAMS, Carlyle's Birmingham friend, I 93, II 134, 144, his well ordered establishment, 145 8  
 Baring, the Hon Mary Florence, I 276  
 Baring, near Cruguenputtoel, I 83 *note*  
 Barnes, Dr, I 215  
 Barnett, Mrs, and family, II 145 6  
 Bell, John, and the first steamship, II 10, 50  
 Bentinck, Lord George, II 170  
 Blackiston, Dr, I 223 4, 227  
 Brand, Robert, I 40  
 Braxfield, Lord, II 230, 262  
 Brewster, II 93, 105  
 Britain, different kinds of citizens of, II 10, 55  
 Bromley, Miss Davenport, I 233, 241  
 Brown, James, touring with Carlyle and Irving, II 43 53  
 Brown, William, I 32  
 Bryden, Rev Mr, II 186  
 Buller, Charles, II 63, he and his brother with Carlyle in Edinburgh, 103-5, at Kew Green, 141, end of the engagement, 142  
 Buller, Mr and Mrs, I 187, II 102 7, 141  
 Burns, contrasted with Carlyle's Father, I 12 14, Mrs Montagu's recollection of, II 129  
 CAMPBELL, Mr (the Argyll Frac-

- tor), and his two sisters, II 50
- Campbell, Thomas, II 137, 184.
- Carlile, Sir Anthony, II 133
- Carlile, Warrand, II 77, 87
- Carlyle, Adam, of Bridekirk, I 23  
*note*
- Carlyle, Alexander, I 96, 99, 123, 272, II 92, 178, 194.
- Carlyle, James See Carlyle's Father
- Carlyle, James, Jun, I 241, 248, 272, II 66, 209
- Carlyle, Janet, I 272, II 177
- Carlyle, Jean, I 120, 272, II 92, 177
- Carlyle, John, I 41
- Carlyle, John Aitken, at St. Leonards, I 227, 230, 232, 233 4, with Carlyle in London, 253, appointed Executor, 266-73, death, I 277 *note*, youthful days at home, II 92, visits Craigenputtock with a letter of Goethe's for his brother, 193, Travelling Physician to the Countess of Clare, 201, 259, letter concerning Hazlitt's death, 251 *note*
- Carlyle, Margaret, I 8 *note*, her beautiful character and early death, II 193 5, mentioned also, 222
- Carlyle, Mary (Carlyle's sister), ever kindly helpful, I 120, 234, 272, 194.
- Carlyle, Mrs (Jane Baillie Welsh), born July 14th, 1801, I 53, Miss Jewsbury's mythical account of her (written at Lady Lothian's request), 54 69, Carlyle's corrections and comments, 69 82, 89 99 her love for her Father, 71 2, 144, childhood anecdotes, 76-8, at Comley Bank, 79, 85, at Craigenputtock, 80-90, II 243 5, friendship for Jeffrey, I 86, 89, II 238 9, 265, kindness to poor old Esther, I 87-8, first visit to London, 92, II 201-3, terrible headaches, very hearty for London, I 97, settled in Cheyne Row, "her life brighter and braver than my own," 100, II 211, helpful sympathy on learning that the first volume of the *French Revolution* was burnt, I 106 9, esteem for Mazzini, 110, Godefrroi Cavaignac, 111, Mr and Mrs Sterling, 112, her one soirée, the two wax candles, 115, 255-6, intercourse with the aristocracy, 116 19, 128 32, 244, first impression of Lady Ashburton, visit to Addiscombe, 119 visit to Carlyle's mother, 121, II 180, her own mother's death, I 121, bitter grief and many loving remorse, 122 3, settles life rent of Craigenputtock on her mother, 123, interest in the Duke of Wellington, 129, ancestors, 133 5, her paternal grandmother's runaway match, 138, affection for her old grandfather, 139, her last parting with her mother, 150, love for her maternal grandfather, old Walter Welsh, 151, 159, and for his son, her 'Uncle John,' 166, liked London constantly, 171, esteem for Erasmus Darwin, 173, visits Harriet Martineau's soirées under difficulties, 178, does not always participate in her husband's *leavings*,

182 tablet to her memory, 184  
 intercourse with the Stur-  
 lings, 186, at Troson Parson-  
 age with Mrs. Buller, 187,  
 wonderful how she maintained  
 her cheerfulness, 188-90, 197-8,  
 201, 216, 240, 242 architectural  
 talent, 193, extinguishes two  
 demon fowls, 194, sufferings  
 during the time of *Irishbuck*,  
 200-3, the *cause* of her suffer-  
 ings, 203-4, accompanies Lady  
 Ashburton to Edinburgh, 205,  
 visits her Aunts and the  
 Donaldsons at Haddington, 207,  
 her Letters, 208-10, a serious  
 accident and its consequences,  
 210-5, partial recovery, 216,  
 renewed illness, 218, scene with  
 a Catholic nurse, 221-3, to St  
 Leonards in an "invalid car-  
 riage," 224, partial recovery once  
 more, 230, to Mrs. Forster in  
 Kensington, 233, to Annandale,  
 234, to Nithsdale, 235, in  
 Chelsea again, continually im-  
 proving, 236, with Mrs. Ewart  
 at Nithbank, 239, kind interest  
 in her poor old hundredress, 243,  
 the Edinburgh address, her af-  
 fectionate encouragement and  
 anxiety, 245-7, plain victory, in  
 the sight of her own people, and  
 of all the world, 248-9, sudden  
 and painless death, 250-1, buried  
 in her Father's grave at Had-  
 dington, 254, her Mother's two  
 wax candles to be lighted and  
 burned, 255-6

Carlyle, receives tidings of his  
 Father's death, I 1-3, marks  
 down the main things he can  
 recollect of him, 4, a sacred

pride in his peasant Father, 11,  
 characteristic feelings towards  
 his parents, 15-6, 19, tradition  
 of his forefathers at Burrens, 27,  
 his uncles, 33, his early life not  
 a joyful, but a safe and whole-  
 some one, earliest recollections  
 of his father, 44-6, taken by  
 him to Annan Academy, always  
 generous in his school expenses,  
 46-7, their last meeting, 51

Introduction to the Reminiscences  
 of his wife, 53, repudiates Miss  
 Jewsbury's myths, 68-9, his own  
 corrections and comments, 69  
 82, 87, 90, somehow it solaces  
 me to write of her, 78, 116, 132,  
 166, 171, 184, 189, 193, 257,  
 II 220, 274, life at Comley  
 Bank, I 79, at Cragenputtock,  
 So 90, II 243-5, correspond-  
 ence with Goethe, I 85, futile  
 visit to London with *Sartor*  
*Resartus*, 91-2, his wife joins  
 him there, 92, the return home,  
 95-6, resolves to settle in Lon-  
 don, 96, his departure, and part-  
 ing from his family, 98 *note*,  
 searching for a house, 99, again  
 joined by his wife, decides upon  
 Cheyne Row, 100, II 211,  
 writes *French Revolution*, I 103,  
 105-9, 170, the first volume  
 burnt, 106, the whole at last  
 completed, 108, timely aid from  
 Emerson and America, 112,  
 disappointment about the *Lon-  
 don Review*, 113, change  
 worked in him by study of  
 Cromwell, 114, lectures in Ed-  
 ward Street, 114, 185, getting  
 noticed by select individuals of  
 the aristocracy, 116-9, yearly



visits to his mother, 121, many weeks at Templand, on the occasion of Mrs. Welsh's death, 122, the pinch of poverty relaxing, 124, *Cromwell* published, *Latter Day Pamphlets* a great relief to my own conscience, 125, popularity occasioned by the Edinburgh Address, 126, friends, not a few, I have had all along, 127, for many years met the choicest of the English aristocracy at Lord Ashburton's, 128, Wellington, 129-31, death of John Sterling, 131, first visit at Mrs Welsh's house, 146-7, his laughter inherited from both parents, 153 4, visits to Templand, 163-5, 168 70, London acquaintances Mrs Austin, 172, Leigh Hunt, 174 5, Allan Cunningham, 175 6, Harriet Martineau, 176-80, three days in Cromwell's country, 187, the *Letters and Speeches*, 188 9, *Latter Day Pamphlet* time very sad and heavy, 190 1, *Life of Sterling*, 192, like to be driven mad by the demon fowls, 194, visit to his mother's death bed, 195-6, twice in Germany, 196 7, "our books our only children, and in a true sense they were verily *ours*," 198, his unfortunate "sound proof" room, 198-200, the *Friedrich* affair by far the worst we ever had, 200-3, Battle of Mollwitz, 202, in Lady Ashburton's railway carriage to Edinburgh, 205 6, his Wife's Letters, 205 10, her severe illness, 210 24 working at St Leonards, 228 his daily rides there, 229

30, back to Chelsea, 235, Edinburgh Rectorship, 244, the Address, 247-8, intelligence of his Wife's sudden death, 249 52, his return home, 253, the funeral at Haddington, 253 4, forbids the publication of the Notebook as it stands, 257, Deed bequeathing Craigenputtock to the University of Edinburgh, 161-6, Will and Codicil, 257-77 Carlyle first sees Irving at the Annan school, II 16, becomes Mathematical Master there, 18, 231, thoroughly detested his function and position, 19, his Latin *Exegesis*, 20, makes Irving's acquaintance in Edinburgh, 21 4, welcomed by him to Kirkcaldy, 24-7, no two Kaisers more kindly, 26, Irving's Library of great use, 28, pleasant and profitable talk, 29, farewell sympathy for Mr and Mrs Glen, 32 3, 37, last feeble tatter of connection with clerical outlooks allowed to snap, 39, influence of the old English writers, 41 tour to the Trosachs, etc., with Irving and others, 43 53, through Yarrow and Moffatdale, 53 6, Irving's high appreciation first led him to compare his father with other men, 56, life at Kirkcaldy, Margaret Gordon, 56 9, tired of schoolmastering, but with very dubious prospects, 59 61, timorously aiming towards literature, 60, 232 5, Sympathy with the Radical "rising" in Glasgow, 68 9, visits to Irving, always with friendliest welcome, 70 2, meetings with

- Dr Chalmers, 72-5, George  
 Fourth flunkysm in Edinburgh,  
 85, first visit to Haddington,  
 85 7, religious confidences with  
 Irving in Drumlog Moss, 88 90,  
 unvaried kindness at his own  
 Father's house, 91 2, Irving's  
 voice, when he visited Annan  
 dale, always one of blessedness  
 and new hope, 97, generous,  
 wise, beneficent, all his dealings  
 and discourses with me were,  
 98, Carlyle the last friend he  
 took farewell of before going to  
 London, 99, becomes tutor to  
 Charles and Arthur Buller in  
 Edinburgh, 102 5, dyspepsia,  
 107, 110, 113, 115, 140, rumours  
 of Irving's boundless popularity,  
 108, meets him on his wedding  
 tour, 109, writes *Schiller*, en-  
 couraged by Irving, who intro-  
 duced it to the *London Maga-*  
*zine*, 113, extract from the  
*Life of Schiller* in the *Times*,  
 114, *Wilkhelm Meister*, 115,  
 visits to Irving in London, 116,  
 received by all with the old  
 friendliness, and introduced to  
 many warm friends of distinc-  
 tion and influence, 117 34, 140,  
 142, 166, 168, "air castles,"  
 before taking to *French Revolu-*  
*tion*, 122, visits to Coleridge,  
 130-2, to Campbell, 137, "ob-  
 stinacy as of ten mules," but  
 with something worthily human  
 in it too, 140 with Charles  
 Buller at Kew Green, 141 throws  
 up the Buller engagement,  
 141 2, stage coach to Birming-  
 ham, 143, the guest of Mr  
 Bradams, 145 55, in a coal  
 mine with Professor Airy, 154,  
 trip to Paris, 156 65, back to  
 London, *Schiller* stitched into  
 a book, 166, sees Irving in the  
 distance, 167, resolves to re-  
 nounce all "ambitions," offers  
 to release Miss Welsh from  
 their tacit engagement, 168,  
 Allan Cunningham, 169, first  
 letter from Goethe, 169, boat-  
 ing from London Bridge to  
 Twickenham, 171 3, prepares  
 to return home, 174, passes  
 through Lancashire, 176, his  
 sisters meet him at Ecclefechan,  
 177, at Hoddom Hill, a russet-  
 coated Idyll in his memory,  
 177 81 here first realised what  
 the old Christian people meant  
 by "conversion," by God's  
 Infinite Mercy to them, 180, a  
 visit from Irving at Comley  
 Bank, 185, and at Craigenput-  
 tock, 186 9, Irving's "heresies,"  
 189 90, Public Dinner in Dum-  
 fries, 190, the drive home, ten  
 miles of it soundly asleep, 191 2,  
 death of his sister Margaret,  
 193 5, a long letter from Goethe,  
 193, journey to London, 195,  
 again sees Irving, brotherly as  
 ever in his reception, 196, col-  
 loquies on Democracy, 197,  
*Sartor Resartus* locked away in  
 to sixty of silence, 200 1, un-  
 expected news of his Father's  
 death, 203, expostulation with  
 Irving concerning the strange  
 course he was entering on, 206  
 8, last sad, yet loving inter-  
 views, 212 5  
 First journey to Edinburgh,  
 and sight of the Law Courts,

221 5, first visit to Jeffrey, 235 7, articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, 237, Jeffrey's visits at Comley Bank, 238 9, his acquaintance an immense acquisition, 240, ready to have tried anything in practical help, 241, his visits to Craigenputtock, 245 50, a return visit to Craighcrook, sharp fencing bouts night after night, 252 3, Jeffrey's generous offer of pecuniary help, 254 5, visits at Ampton Street, 161-3, Carlyle's old enthusiasms not dead, eagerly desirous of some humblest anchorage, 265, disappointed hope as to the Edinburgh Observatory, 266 8, often felt, while writing the *French Revolution*, that he *could* learn to do almost anything, from engineering and architecture, up to still higher things of the physical or spiritual kind,—yet forbidden to try any of them, 266, his condition of mind while writing the Reminiscences of Irving and Jeffrey, 274

Dreadfully in want of some *Task* again, 274 5, first acquaintance with Southey's Books, 276-8, Southey introduced to him by Henry Taylor, 278 85, wild excitation of nerves, after finishing that grim book, the *French Revolution*, 286, the *Athenæum's* placid condemnation of it, 287, Thackeray's laudation of it in the *Times*, Mrs Carlyle's vain attempts to cheer and irradiate his darkness, 288 Southey's sympathy,

assent, and recognition of it, as a salutary bit of "scriptural" exposition for the public and mankind, 289, the other Conscript Fathers of Literature, as with *Sartor*, had declined to vote at all, 289 90, Southey at Cheyne Row, 291 2, mutual estimates of Shelley, 292 3; last interview with Southey, 294, tidings of his last illness and death, 295

Incapable of anything to be called "work" for two weeks past, 297 *note*, indifference to Wordsworth's poetry, a fine limpid vein of melody in it, but stunted, palish and uncertain, 297 8, meets him at Henry Taylor's, 299, tries to talk with him about our great poets, 302, interested in his clear sketches of the notable men he had seen in life, 303 5, greatly struck with his luminous and veracious power of insight in such matters, 304, and also with his equanimity and rock like indifference as literary lion, 307-9, Why should I continue these melancholy jottings? I live mostly alone with vanished Shadows of the Past, 309, for ever true that 'GOD reigns,' 310

Carlyle, Rev Gavin, II 77, 218

Carlyle's Aunt Fanny, I 32

Carlyle's Father, his peaceful death, I 1, II 260, he, exclusively, determined to educate his son, I 3, 18, 46, a man of the largest natural endowment, 5, never spoke of what was disagreeable and past, 6, would

leave nothing till it was *done*, 7, any talk that had meaning in it he could listen to, but to no other, 8, irascible, but with a sincerity that compelled belief and regard, 9, man's face he did not fear, God he always feared, 10, by no means an insubordinate man, 11, a grave natural politeness in him, 12, indifference to Burns and his poetry, wholly a man of action, 13, education the most limited, 14, his heart seemed as if walled in, 15, a merciful heart to real distress, a wisely generous economist, 16 7, 19, singularly free from affectation and envy, 17, liked to listen to a good argument, 18, a man of strength and a man of toil, 20, his sorrow at leaving Brown known, 21, stunted childhood, 21-2, 28, a good son, 23, boyish quarrels, liked to speak of his father, 24-5, early force of conscience, 29-30, John Orr his sole teacher in schooling, 32, he and his brothers learn to be masons, 33, assists in building Auldgarth Bridge, 35, his visit there in after years, 36, 84, a dim picture of his youth and opening manhood, 37 40, religious influences, 40, death of his first wife, 41 2, marries Margaret Aitken, 42, well established in Ecclefechan, 43, early recollections of him, 44 6, his tender consideration, 47, 51, his sympathy with the sufferings of the poor, 48, quits the mason trade, and becomes a

farmer, 49, visits Craigenputtock, 50, 84, a father to be loved and honoured, 52, his hearty laughter, 153, Irving's clear recognition of, and appreciation by him, II 56, his talk compared with Wordsworth's, 305  
 Carlyle's Grandfather and his family, I 21 8  
 Carlyle's Mother, her resignation in trouble, I 2, free loving nature, 15 6, 47, II 66, 83, frugal without stinginess, I 19, married in 1795, 42, motherly self-control, 98 *note*, her son's yearly visits, 121, her beautiful sportive laughter, 154, her pious life and death, 195 6, her son's heterodoxy, II 92  
 Cavaignac, Godefroi, at Cheyne Row, I 110-28,  
 Chalmers, Dr, II 30, 108, hears Irving preach, 61, Carlyle's interviews with, 72 5  
 Charles X, seen by Carlyle in the Louvre, II 162  
 Chezy, M. de, Carlyle's interview with, in Paris, II 164  
 Chorley, John R., a warm and faithful friend to Carlyle, and one of the best read men in London, I 198 *note*  
 Christison, Professor, II 26  
 Church, Mr, of Hitchill, II 19, 85  
 Clerk, John, II 224-5  
 Coleridge, and his influence, II 41, 111, 198, 283, Carlyle's visits, 130-2  
 Comely Bank, I 79 *note*  
 Comte and Positivism, II 219  
 Crugerkirk, I 86 *note*  
 Crugerkirkputtock, I 80 *note*, 87, Mrs. Carlyle gives it in different

- to her mother, 122, bequest of,  
by Carlyle, to the University of  
Edinburgh, 124 *note*, 261 6
- Craik, Miss Mary, I 228, 231, 235
- Criticism and its value, I 126 8
- Cunningham, Allan, I 175 6, II  
169, dinner to, at Dumfries,  
190-1
- DARWIN, Charles, I 173
- Darwin's, Erasmus, visits to  
Cheyne Row, I 173
- Davis, President, I 239
- Democracy, forbidden, inevitable,  
II 197
- De Quincey, and his review of  
*Wilhelm Meister*, II 151 3,  
Southey's rage against him,  
282 3
- Dickens, Charles, I 248, II 250
- Dickson, Mrs., Irving's eldest  
sister, II 95, 181, 184 5
- Dinwiddie, Mr zealous friend of  
Irving's, II 121
- Dixon, Frank, his sunny career,  
with tragic thunders waiting it,  
II 62 7
- Donaldson, Irving's assistant at  
Kirkcaldy, II 32.
- Donaldson, the Misses, I 203, 207
- Dow, Rev David, II 186
- Drummond, Henry, I 103, II  
101, 218, Carlyle's description  
of 187, 198-9
- Duncan, Rev Henry, of Ruth  
well, II 19
- ECCLEFFCHAN Meeting - House,  
II 15
- Ellice, Edward, M P for Coventry,  
I 206
- Emerson's visit to Craigenputtock,  
I 85, in America, first printed
- Sartor Resartus* in book form,  
90 *note*, sent Carlyle £150  
from sales of *French Revolution*,  
112.
- Empson, Mrs, II 247, 269, 270
- Empson, William, II 269, 270
- Esther's, old, last days, I 87-9
- Erskine, Thomas, I 247 8, II  
75 *note*.
- FEARN, Mr, II 132.
- Fenwick, Miss, Sir Henry Taylor's  
cousin, II. 279, 291 2.
- Fleming, Dr, of Edinburgh, II 103,
- Forster, John, his devoted friend-  
ship to Carlyle, I 190, 226, 248,  
250, 266, 276, his unexampled  
kindness, 251, 253, appointed  
one of Carlyle's Executors,  
266 73
- French, Rev Mr, entertains Car-  
lyle, Irving, and Warrand Car-  
lile, II 88
- French Revolution, the, a suicidal  
explosion of an old wicked world,  
too wicked, false and impious  
for living longer, II 289
- Froude, Mr, editorial inaccur-  
acies, see Preface, also I 54,  
his loving promise to take  
precious charge of the "Letters  
and Memorials," 270, Executor,  
in place of John Forster, de-  
ceased, 274, mentioned also,  
189, 210, 266
- GEORGE IV's visit to Edinburgh,  
II 84.
- Gibbon, II 28
- Glasgow Radicals, rising of the,  
II 68, Life in Glasgow, 70-2.
- Glen, Mr and Mrs, of Annan,  
II 32 3, 37, 231

Godby, Mrs, I 210  
 Goethe, I 11, his correspondence  
   with Carlyle, 85, II 169, 193,  
   Carlyle's endless debt to him, 180  
 Gomm, Sir William, I 238  
 Gordon, Margaret, II 57 9  
 Gorsas, execution of, II 303  
 Graham, Sir James, I 165  
 Graham, William, of Burnswark,  
   I 89, II 71, account of him  
   and his family, 78 84.  
 Grant, Captain, II 122

HAALES OWEN, and its nail forges,  
 II 149

Hall, Captain Basil, II 60

Hall, Dr, of Leicester, II 151

Hamilton, William, Mrs Irving's  
 brother in law, II 121

Harvard College, bequest of books  
 to, in remembrance of many kind  
 nesses received from America,  
 I 268 9

Hazlitt, II 85, II 111, 132, 250-1

Henderson, Robert, I 39

Hewelius, Johannes, II 234 *note*

Hoddam Hill, Carlyle for a year  
 tenant of, II 177 8

Holland, Lady, I 117

Hope, Adam, Irving's schoolmaster  
 at Annan, II 6-14, his uncle  
 David, 10, his wife's death, 24

Hope, David, Adam's cousin, II  
 71, 77

Horro, II 234

Houghton, Lord, I 247

Hunt, Leigh, at Cheyne Row, I  
 101, described, 104, 174 5

Huxley, Professor, I 247

INCHKEITH, and its Lighthouse,  
 II 35 7

Inglis, Dr, II 231

Irving, Edward, his reverence for  
 Dr Welsh, I 74, 143, his one  
 visit to Cheyne Row, 103, II  
 1, 215, always so hoping and  
 so generous, I 135, takes Car-  
 lyle to Mrs Welsh's house, 146,  
 II 85, his kindred cheerfully  
 quiet, rational and honest people,  
 26, his mother a tall black-  
 eyed handsome woman, 5, his  
 remarkable schoolmaster, Adam  
 Hope, 6 14, early religious life,  
 11 5, visits Annan school, 16 8,  
 slight tiff with Carlyle in Edin-  
 burgh, 22 4, heartily welcomes  
 him to Kirkcaldy, 24 7, a pleas-  
 ant and profitable time, 29,  
 walks and talks together, 29 32,  
 the Inchkeith adventure, 32-7,  
 visits to Edinburgh, 38, his  
 early earnest style of preaching,  
 40 3, tour to the Trosachs, etc.,  
 with Carlyle, Pears, and James  
 Brown, 43 53, with Carlyle  
 through Yarrow and Moffatdale,  
 53-6, ever increasing esteem  
 between Irving and Carlyle's  
 Father, 56, looking forward to  
 a Clerical career, 59 61, negotia-  
 tion with Dr Chalmers, 61,  
 accepted by the great Doctor and  
 his Congregation, 67, his friendly  
 sympathy with the poor Glasgow  
 weavers, 70, life in Glasgow,  
 71, characteristics of his ser-  
 mons, 75 77, takes Carlyle to  
 Haddington, 85, with Carlyle  
 on Drumclog Moss, 88, his  
 happy visits to his happy home  
 in Annandale, 96, very generous  
 to everybody's talent, 97, his  
 position at Glasgow not without  
 its embarrassments, 98, invited

to London, 99, huge contentment of his congregation and of all onlookers, 100, recommends Carlyle as Tutor to Charles Buller and his brother, 102, rumours in Scotland of his boundless popularity, 108, on his wedding tour, superlatively happy, 109 13, introduces Carlyle's *Schiller* to the *London Magazine*, 113, warmly welcomes him in London, and introduces him to London society, 116 134, 140, 142, 166, 168, drawing room furnished as if by beneficent fairies, 118, a pretty group of merry girls, 120, his preaching at Hatton Garden, 134, Christian Religion to be a truth again, and not a mere paltry form, 135, his popularity and endless patience with people crowding about him, 136 7, 140, laying the foundation of the Caledonian Chapel, 142, at Dover with Carlyle and the Stracheys, 155 6, 165, "Pulpit Popularity," 167, 173, Interpretations of Prophecy, 174 5, 187, address to the Missionary Society, 182, a touch of rash ostentation, 183, brief visit to his father and mother at Annan, 183 4, visit to Comley Bank, 185, must go then, and suffer persecutions as my fathers have done, 186, visit to Craigenputtock, franker and happier than for a long time, 186 9, deposed from the Scottish Established Kirk, 189 90, 208-9, removes to a larger house in Judd Street, 196, talk with Carlyle, getting deep in pro-

phesy and other aberrations, condemnation of Democracy, 197, Gift of Tongues, 204 5, Carlyle's earnest and friendly expostulation, met by him with a modesty and friendly magnanimity which no mortal could surpass, 206 8, the last time he ever preached in Annandale, 209, met by Carlyle in Kensington Gardens, his hair grown gray, his elasticity and strength gone, but himself as kind and loving as ever, 212, at Newman Street, 214, his first, and farewell visit to Cheyne Row, 215 6, his last letters to his Wife, of almost apocalyptic impressiveness, 217

Irving, George, with his brother at Kirkcaldy, II 27

Irving, Washington, II 161

JEFFREY, Lord, I 79, visits to Craigenputtock, 85 6, 89, II 245-8, the cleverest of advocates, I 141, II 226, introduces Carlyle to Murray, 200, one of the Scotch Judges, 221 *note*, 224, singular instance of his Advocate skill, 225 9, personal characteristics, 230 1, 262, Carlyle's first visit, 235-7, return visit, much taken with Mrs Carlyle, 238 9, 265, long discussions, and argumentative thrustings and parryings between him and Carlyle, 240 2, his singular talent for mimicry, 248 50, sends £50 for Hazlitt, 251, receives Mr and Mrs Carlyle at Craigcrook, in curable divergence of opinions,

- 252 3, generously presses upon Carlyle an annuity of £100, which could not be accepted, 254, lends £100, punctually repaid within a few weeks, 255, parliamentary wear and tear, 256 7, his apartments in Jermyn Street, 258, recommends Dr John Carlyle as Travelling Physician to Lady Clare, 259, frequent visits to Ampton Street, 261-3, offends Carlyle about the appointment to the Edinburgh Observatory, 265 8, returns to Edinburgh, seldom a better Judge, said everybody, 269, his peaceful death, 270, his influence on Literature, 271-3
- Jeffrey, Mrs, previously Miss Wilkes, II 247-8, 270 *note*
- Jewsbury's, Miss, mythical account of Mrs Carlyle, I 54 69, Carlyle's corrections, 69 84, 89 90, her account of the burning of the candles, 255
- Johnston, Rev John, of Ecclefechan, I 40 1, II 13
- Johnston, Mr and Mrs, of the Grange, Annandale, II 83, 181
- Johnstone, James, II 225
- KENNEDY, Nell, defended by Jeffrey, II 226 8
- Kirkcaldy, Carlyle and Irving at, II 29 37, Irving preaches in Kirkcaldy Kirk, 42
- Kirkpatrick, Miss, a great favourite with Irving and his Wife, II 117 8, 123, her interesting character, 125, her trip, with Mr Strachey and Carlyle, to Paris, 156 8
- Knob, John, I 133
- VOL. II
- LAMB, Charles, as he appeared to Carlyle, I 94, II 132
- Laplace, seen by Carlyle in Paris, II 163
- Larkin, Henry, sent for by Mrs Carlyle, I 215
- Laughter, characteristic kinds of, I 153-4
- Laurie, Sir Peter, II 121 2, 162
- Legendre, Carlyle's brief interview with, II 163
- Leslie, Professor, II 17, 26
- London Review*, starting of the, I 113
- London University, the, progressing towards fulfilment, II 184.
- Lothian, Lady, I 69, 132
- Lytelton, Lord, II 150
- MACBETH, Rev Mr, Irving's compassion for, II 137 9
- Macculloch, Ramsay, I 165
- Macdonald, Grace, I 80
- Macleod, Sandy, at Brownknowe, I 28
- Malcolm, Lieutenant, meets Carlyle in Paris, II 159, hanging loosely by literature in Edinburgh, 160, disgust for War, 160 1
- Marshall, the, of Leeds, I 117, 181 4, II 306
- Martineau, Harriet, I 176 180
- Martin, Rev Mr, Minister at Kirkcaldy, II 39, 153, 215
- Mason, a noble craft that of a, I 37
- Masson, David, I 266, 276
- Maxwell, Sir W, "like one of the Gentlemen in Goethe," I 11
- Mazzini, his visits at Cheyne Row, I 110-11
- Mentone, Carlyle at, II 196
- Methodism, II 188
- Y



- Files, Eliza, I 68, 92, 102, II 202.  
 Millar, Mr, Laird of Dalswinton, and builder of the first model steamship, II 49  
 Mill, John Stuart, one of Carlyle's most interesting visitors, I 92, introduces Mrs. Taylor, 104, very helpful about the *French Revolution*, 105, burning of the first volume, 106-7  
 Moffatdale, with its green holms and hill ranges, II 55.  
 Moirs, G, sketches of Craigenputtock, I 85  
 Moleworth, Sir William, I 113  
 Moncreiff, Sir Harry, his high regard for Irving, II 99  
 Monagu, Basil, his parentage and household, II 126-30  
 Monagu, Mrs, I 92, II 112, 127-30, 181  
 Montague, Lord (Spring-Rice), I 116, 183, 187, II 306  
 Morley, Mr, teacher of mathematics, II 17  
 Murderer's stelling furnace, tragedy, II 90-1  
 Murray the publisher, II 200-1, 258  
 NELLESC, Joseph, for more than twenty years, ever loyal, ever patient, ever willing to do service in every kind, I 191  
 N. a. a maternal teacher in Edinburgh, II 32.  
 OLIPHANT, Mr I 73, 249 II 136 *See* *Life of Irving*, 216  
 Orr, John, son of Hector, a student, I 29  
 his devout yet irregular life, 30-2.  
 Owen, Robert Dale, II 52  
 PAPPES, Joe, of Birmingham, II 150  
 Parr, Dr, II 144, 148-9  
 Pears, fellow tourist with Carlyle and Irving, II 43-53, leaves Karl badly, 59  
 Pictet's, M, *Theory of Gravitation*, II 233-4.  
 Poor, the condition of the, growing worse and worse, I 48, II 68-9  
 Posterty, II 204  
 Praed, W M, II 280-1  
 Procter, B W, II 133-4, introduces Carlyle to Jeffrey, 235  
 Publishers' accounts, II 170  
 QUAIN, Dr, I 223-4, writes an authentic account of Mrs. Carlyle's death, 250, his kindness to Carlyle, 251  
 Queensberry, the Duke of, and his well-contented farmers, II 4, 79  
 PEARCE, George, I 70  
 Penitence, Tower of, II 177  
 Pridelous, sense of the, I 154.  
 Polson, Crabbe, first of the 'Own Correspondents,' II 132  
 Rhodes, Countess of, II 32  
 Russell, Dr, I 235  
 Russell's, Lady William, friendship for Mrs Carlyle, I 118, 244.  
 Rutherford, Andrew, II 259  
 ST LEONARD, I 229  
 Sandwich the Dowager Lady, I 118, 131  
 Sartor Resartus, written at Craigen-

- enputtock, I 90, declined by the publishers, 91 2, II 200, first genesis of, 190 1, not the smallest whisper of recognition, 289
- Seotsbrig, a farmhouse in the parish of Middlebie, I 1 *note*
- Shurpe, General, I 50
- Shelley, Southey's and Carlyle's estimate of, II 292 3
- Sinclair, Sir John, met by Carlyle and Irving, II 175
- Skirving, author of *Preston Par's Battle*, his answer to a military challenge, II 86 *note*
- Smul, Tom, Carlyle's first companion to Edinburgh, II 221-5
- Smith, W., M.P. for Norwich, II 276
- Smollett's Pillar, II 47
- Southey as a Writer, II 276 S, Carlyle introduced to him by Henry Taylor, 278 85, personal characteristics, 279, 281-2, 283 *note*, 284, his contempt for the existing set of Parliaments, 280, his rage against Dr. Quincey, 282 3, overwhelmed in domestic misery, 285, further interviews with Carlyle, 285, his ample recognition of the true purpose of *French Revolution*, 289, visit to Carlyle in Cheyne Row, 291-3, could not rise into admiration of Shelley, 292, his second marriage, 293, 295, Carlyle's last interview, earnest talk of the steady decline of morality in England, 294, Southey's last sad days, 295
- Spedding, James, I 182, II 300
- Stephen, Sir James, and the Colonial Office, I 186
- Stephen, Sir J. F., one of Carlyle's Lecturers, I 275
- Sterling, John, I 131, 186, II 299, Carlyle's *Life of*, I 192
- Sterlings, the, at Cheyne Row, I 109, 112, 186
- Story, Rev. Robert, of Roseneath, II 48
- Strachey, Mr., II 124, 156 7, 164
- Strachey, Mrs., II 49, 181, her beautiful character, 102, 118, 123, at Dover with the Irvings, 155 6, gifts to Carlyle, 176
- Style in writing, II 41
- Sweetheart Abbey, I 164 *note*, 266
- TAIT, ROBERT, I 276
- Talma, Carlyle sees, act at Paris, II 165
- Taylor, Sir Henry, I 109, 115, Carlyle's description of, II 278, introduces him to Southey and Wordsworth, 279, 281, 299
- Tennent, Sir Emerson, II 159
- Thackeray's review of the *French Revolution*, II 288
- Thompson, publisher of Burns's Songs, II 94
- Thomson, Rev. Andrew, II 61-2
- Twisleton, Hon. Edward, I 253
- Tyndall, Professor, accompanies Carlyle to Edinburgh, I 246-S, and to Mentone, II 196
- WARREN, Mrs., I 255-6, 268
- Wauagh, Dr., Carlyle's predecessor at the Annan school, II 21, Carlyle and Irving meet at his house in Edinburgh, 22 3

- Wellington, the Duke of, at Bath House, I 129, his Funeral Procession, characteristics of his speaking, 130, mentioned, 172
- Welsh, Benjamin, Dr Welsh's youngest brother, I 146
- Welsh, Dr, tender affection for his daughter, I 71, Irving's reverential feeling for him, 74, 143 4, his death, 74, purchased Craigenputtock, *See note*, 138, his parentage, 133, born at Craigenputtock, 141, schooling, and steady success in his profession, 142 5, a kind heart, 145, marries Grace Welsh of Caplegill, 145, their married life loyal and happy, sunnier than most, 149
- Welsh, Jennie, old Walter Welsh's excellent and devoted daughter, I 157, her death, 160
- Welsh, John, minister of Ayr, and son in law to John Knox, I 133 4
- Welsh, John, Mrs Carlyle's maternal uncle, I 95, a prosperous merchant in Liverpool, 156, assists his old father, 157, almost ruined by the treachery of his partner, 158, all his father's veracity and integrity, kind, munificent and frank, 166 7, his creditors all honourably and gratefully paid, 168, his visits to Craigenputtock, 170.
- Welsh, John, Mrs. Carlyle's paternal grandfather, I 133, probabilities as to his descent from John Knox, I 133 4, clearness, decision, and integrity of character, 135, his grandfather's adventure with the Dragoons, etc., 136, his runaway match, 138, sells Craigenputtock to his son, Dr Welsh, and prospers as a farmer, 138 40
- Welsh, Miss Margaret, Mrs Carlyle's cousin, I 206, 208, 219, 224, 254, 268
- Welsh, Mrs, her death, I 121, little faults of character, 123, Carlyle's first visit, 146, a most generous, honourable, affectionate turn of mind, 148 51, takes unwearied care of her old father, 161
- Welsh, old Walter, and his little grandchild, I 77, Mrs Carlyle's maternal grandfather, 151, microcosm of old Scottish Life as it had been, 152, 'his radiant ever young Apollo' laugh, 153, married and settled at Caplegill, 154, lost it at last by the treachery of a neighbour, 155, after that had no more farming prosperity, 156, peaceful life at Templeland, 157-63
- Welsh, Robert, at Craigenputtock, I 84, 134.
- Whewell, Professor, I 173, 183
- Wilberforce the philanthropist, II 304 5
- Wilhelm Meister*, II 115, 219
- Wilkie's *Rent Day*, II 73 4.
- Will and Testament, Carlyle's Last, I 267 77
- Wilson, I 79, II 111
- Wilson's, Miss, interest in Carlyle's Lectures, I 115, 185
- Wordsworth, Carlyle's and Sir Henry Taylor's estimates of, II 297 8, their several meetings,

- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 229, talked with veracity, easy<br>brevity, and force, 300 1, per-<br>sonal characteristics, 301, his<br>limiting abatements of our great<br>poets, seemed to know but one<br>supreme specimen, 302, his<br>clear eye for the notable men he | had met, 303 5, his perfect<br>equanimity as a literary lion,<br>306 9<br><br>YARROW and its shepherds, hap-<br>piest of peasant labourers, II<br>54 |
|--|--|

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